

Deductions from The World War

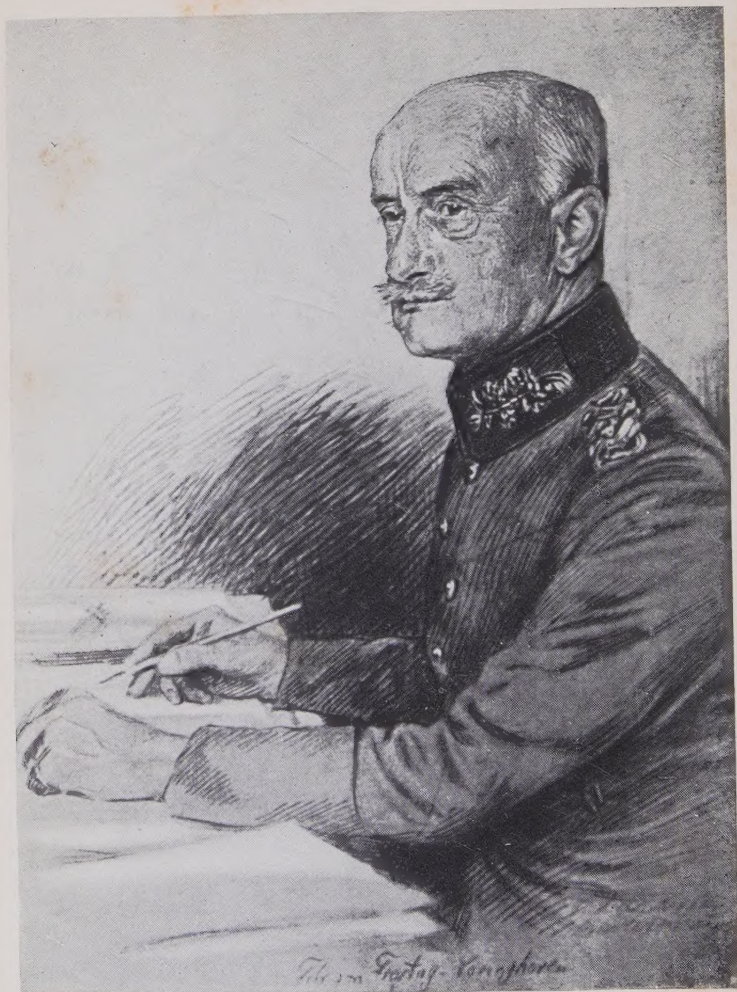
Baron von Freytag-Loringhoven

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DEDUCTIONS FROM THE WORLD WAR

BY

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AND

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Baron von Freytag-Loringhoven, the author of this book, is the most distinguished soldier-writer of Prussia. In other words, since none will dispute Prussia her militarism, he is the most distinguished living writer on militarism in theory and practice.

Freytag comes of a Baltic family. He was born in Russia, the son of a Russian diplomatist, and he served in the Russian Army before, at the age of twenty-one, he joined a Prussian Guard Regiment. Before the war he was an influential member of the General Staff in Berlin, and had made a reputation by his writings on the history and science of war. On the outbreak of war he became the German representative on the Austro-Hungarian General

Staff. The military weakness of Austria has in recent years been a commonplace in Berlin, and Freytag duly tells us how the "brave troops" of the Dual Monarchy "had to suffer for the sins and omissions of which the Parliaments had been guilty." When Count Moltke, the Chief of the German General Staff, was superseded by Falkenhayn, after the failure of the original German offensive in the West, Freytag became Quartermaster-General in the field, and Moltke became Deputy Chief of the General Staff—that is to say, head of such parts of the General Staff Organization as remain in Berlin, while the main business of the General Staff is conducted from "Great Headquarters" in the field.

At the beginning of August, 1916, Falkenhayn was superseded in his turn by Hindenburg, after the German failure at Verdun. Freytag's post of Quartermaster-General was merged in the larger post which was now created for Ludendorff, and,

Moltke having died in June, Freytag was appointed in September, 1916, to the post, which he still holds, of Deputy Chief of the General Staff.

Shortly before his appointment, Freytag's position as chief writer to the Prussian Army was put beyond dispute by his decoration with the Order Pour le Mérite (Peace Class). The Order Pour le Mérite (Military Class) was founded by Frederick the Great, and has now been conferred upon innumerable Prussian officers. Freytag is apparently the only officer who has received during the present war the Order Pour le Mérite (Peace Class), which was founded by Frederick William IV in 1842, and is conferred for distinction in "Science and Arts."

"DEDUCTIONS FROM THE WORLD WAR" was written for German consumption. As soon as a few German newspaper reviews called attention to its contents, and especially to the chapters

"The Army in the Future" and "Still Ready for War," with their candid explanation of the way in which Germany proposes, this war finished, to prepare for the next, all comment was restricted or suppressed. Circulation of the book in Germany was promoted, but its export was prohibited, and very few copies have found their way across the frontier.

This book is interesting as an attempt to lay the foundations of "history"; it is comparable with the "popular edition" of Moltke's "History of the Franco-German War of 1870," upon which a whole generation of Germany was brought up, while the real history of the war was being written in France—for posterity. The book is very instructive as a denunciation of international ideals and as a warning of the plans which are being made in Berlin for the cold and reasoned application of the lessons of the war and the development of a still more scientific military system, a still

more perfect war-machine, than existed in 1914. Again, we have here, on the best possible authority, the warning that Germany—with all her avowed indignation at the idea of an economic “war after the war”—is determined not only to rebuild her military system, but to build it this time upon an indestructible economic foundation. But above all Freytag’s book is a revelation because he says what Germany thinks. “War has its basis in human nature,” he writes, “and as long as human nature remains unaltered, war will continue to exist, as it has existed already for thousands of years.” That view is universal in Germany, and to the German people Freytag’s deductions will seem to be only logic and common sense. In reality, Freytag the soldier says nothing a whit stronger in praise of militarism than is said in his apt quotations from Prince Bülow the civilian. Militarism is not a Prussian invention; militarism is Prussia herself. And so

long as Prussia rules Germany, all talk that seeks to distinguish "war parties" from "peace parties," "militarists" from "statesmen," is misleading.

J. E. M.

December, 1917.

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

It may seem presumptuous to draw conclusions from the World War while it is still in progress. And yet it is imperative that we should be clear in regard to a number of questions which have presented themselves as a result of the War. We must look for their solution in the State and the Army. The War must admonish us to submit our whole national life and our military organisation to an examination in the light of the experiences which we have gained. Such an examination cannot and should not be much longer postponed.

Without clear views and an adequate understanding of the major sequences of the War, not only as regards operations and tactics, but also as regards world-

politics and world-economics, without carefully balancing the new experience that it has brought us against all that it has confirmed and that has to be maintained, we shall not be in a position to draw accurate deductions for the future. Towards this the writer hopes to contribute by means of the following arguments. They are addressed equally to the Army and the nation. .

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DEDUCTIONS FROM THE WORLD WAR

I

THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION OF THE CENTRAL POWERS

THE grouping of the Powers at the beginning and still more during the course of the World War has been extremely unfavourable to the Central Powers. We must go back to the desperate struggle of Frederick the Great in the Seven Years' War to find anything comparable to it. Napoleon, too, found himself at length pitted against all Europe, but the comparative strength of the opposed forces at the beginning of the autumn campaign of 1813 was by no means un-

favourable to him. The Allies at that time possessed only an insignificant superiority of numbers. Moreover, our enemies have not had to endure what Field-Marshal Count Schlieffen in 1909 justly deduced from the history of previous coalition wars:

“Even when all objections have been disposed of, every difficulty overcome, even when resolution is ripened, and a powerful advance from all sides is about to be set on foot, yet in the breast of every individual the anxious question will still arise: Will the others come? Will our distant Allies take their stand at the right time?”¹

Not only did all the Allies take their stand, but, in addition, they were reinforced by our former allies, Italy and Roumania, while America showed herself more and more clearly a secret ally of the Entente Powers, rendering the most valu-

¹ *Deutsche Revue*, January, 1909.

able services by furnishing them with all manner of requisites of war and pecuniary loans, long before she openly took up her stand against us in February, 1917, by severing diplomatic relations and in April by declaring a state of war. However valuable to Germany and Austria-Hungary has been the alliance of Turkey and later of Bulgaria, an equilibrium of forces could not, of course, be effected by means of these States. England has been successful in keeping the Entente together, and has utilised the fact that the destruction of the Central Powers proved to be far more difficult than had been anticipated in order to strengthen the bond between herself and her Allies. They had involved themselves in a common undertaking, which had not prospered according to expectations. Now there was no alternative but to carry it through, for to give it up would be equivalent to a confession of utter failure and defeat.

The ties which bound the Continental Allies to England were constantly reinforced by the promise held out of territorial acquisitions, as well as by monetary aids. In this connection England's favourable position in world-politics and world-economics stood her in noticeably good stead. The more the prospect vanished of inflicting on us a military defeat with the aid of the blockade, the more England strengthened her endeavour to secure that we should at any rate find ourselves after the War in an unfavourable economic position, both geographically and in respect of commercial treaties. England gave expression to her desire for war and victory by creating a strong land-army, finally adopting the system of universal service. In so doing she broke with her traditional custom of waging Continental wars to all intents and purposes by means of the armies of her Allies.

In the wars against Louis XIV England

had already raised herself to the position of a great Colonial Power and had won for herself supremacy on the sea. As a result of the Seven Years' War, she became a World-Power. It was not, however, until the American War of Independence that she entered upon a period of world-policy and world-economics. It has justly been said:¹

“World-trade there had long been, but not world-policy. Not even England possessed the latter, in spite of her world-embracing settlements and dominions. In fact there existed only European policy. World-policy could only come into being when in the other continents, as well as in our own, independent and permanent centres, capable of asserting themselves against the European Great Powers, had shaped for themselves a State existence. This hap-

¹ Alexander v. Peetz. Introduction to *Weltpolitische Neubildungen*, by Paul Dehn.

pened in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the case of America, and in the twentieth century in the case of Japan."

In the European Continental wars up to 1870-71, when we were still predominantly an agrarian State, questions of world-policy and world-economics had played a comparatively subordinate *rôle*. It has been the development of our trade, combined with the increase of our population, which, in the course of this World War, has thrown into special prominence the significance of these questions in relation to our Fatherland. The import of raw materials, foodstuffs, and manufactured articles, the export of the products of our industries, had become essential conditions of our economic life. In regard to these questions the outbreak of the World War found us insufficiently prepared. Such measures as we had taken were shown to be inadequate. Hence

in our conduct of the War we were faced with a difficult problem, which had not arisen in the case of previous wars on the European mainland. We found ourselves not only at such a disadvantage in regard to the general political situation as we had not hitherto experienced, and, as a consequence of this, faced with an overwhelming superiority of numbers, but also we had to grapple with an economic situation as difficult as could possibly be imagined. This is not the place to examine how far, in view of the all too rapid growth of her trade, world-policy and world-economics may have been premature in the case of Germany, inasmuch as our continental position was still by no means sufficiently assured. Here Ranke's words are applicable: "Who can control circumstances, calculate future events, govern the surging of the elements?"¹ Even the power of prevision

¹ *Ursprung des Siebenjährigen Krieges.*

attributed to great men is after all very limited. Friedjung¹ remarks justly that the real necessity of events and of all which we assert to have taken place in accordance with the laws of history only becomes apparent when the history of the world is considered in large epochs; that, for the rest, history is an ingenious tissue of necessity and chance, and that to estimate future events is consequently hardly possible even for the most clear-sighted contemporary observers. Hence diplomats have often been unjustly accused of furnishing an incorrect report in regard to a foreign country, concerning which they were supposed to possess an exact knowledge. Even the most perfect knowledge of a country does not endow its possessor with the capacity to foresee coming events, although, of course, the gift of exact observation exists in

¹ *Der Kampf um die Vorherrschaft in Deutschland*, Introduction to Vol. II.

different degrees in different individuals. It might well be imagined that, in this age of extreme publicity, it should be easy enough to form a trustworthy estimate of a foreign country and its armed power. The Press and the proceedings of Parliament furnish a host of details from which to build up a complete picture, but whether this picture will prove accurate in case of war is a matter of doubt, for many unforeseen accidents, notably those resulting from the power of personality, are in such matters peculiarly likely to affect the issue. Thus the abundance of news which we have at our disposal at the present day may easily serve only to obscure and distract.

The consequences of the blockade to which the Central Powers were subjected made themselves felt at once. Although we have succeeded by our own might in developing and carrying on our economic life during the War, none the less the dis-

advantages of our economic position in the world have made themselves felt all the time. They alone explain the fact that new opportunities of resistance constantly revealed themselves to our opponents, because the sea was open to them, and that victories which formerly would have been absolutely decisive, and the conquest of whole kingdoms, still brought us no nearer to peace. Thus was Russia able to recover from the severe defeats of the summer of 1915 and to attack once more in the following year with newly-equipped armies.

Though the American Admiral Mahan, in his famous book, *The Influence of Sea-Power on History*, summed up the result of the Seven Years' War as follows: On the sea, immense success and material gain for England, on land, enormous sacrifice of men, with the sole result that the *status quo* was maintained; though he asserts, moreover, that the British fleet

contributed most towards the overthrow of Napoleon by cutting him off from the most important of all sources for replenishing supplies, namely, the sea, the question of sea-power was not really of decisive importance in those times. Pitt, in his speech in Parliament against the Peace of Paris of 1763, already emphasised the fact that North America had been conquered for England in Germany. Napoleon was defeated on land. The Continental States of that time, pre-eminently France, were still agrarian States, and far better able than now to suffice for their own needs for a long time. In our days of world-policy and world-economics, the views of the famous naval writer are far more in accordance with actuality. The fact that we have resorted to submarine warfare as a means of self-defence is in itself a proof of it. The unsparing application of this new weapon will hasten materially the end of this mighty

economic conflict, by means of the economic difficulties which it will create for our opponents and for neutrals. The World War affords incontrovertible proof that Germany must for all time to come maintain her claim to sea-power. We need not at present discuss by what means this aim is to be achieved.

As the result of our geographical situation, it will always remain our task to form a just estimate of the opposing demands of world-economics and national economics in the narrower sense, and of oversea and continental politics. Even in land-warfare, economic considerations have played a very considerable part. The occupation by our troops of Belgium and of the coal and industrial district of Northern France, as well as of Poland, Lithuania, and Kurland, procured us important economic advantages and involved a corresponding loss to our enemies. The main object of the Serbian campaign

was to establish a land communication with Turkey, whose obstinate defence of the Dardanelles had rendered us signal service, since it barred the exit from and entry to the harbours of the Black Sea against Russia. At the same time, the operations against Serbia procured us the valuable alliance of Bulgaria. Not only did we acquire by this means an accession of strength against the numerical superiority of our enemies, but also the possibility of trade intercourse with the Balkan States. A year later, the unwelcome hostility of Roumania and her overthrow procured us further economic advantages and secured our position in regard to the whole of the Balkans. Now, as always, it is the sword which decides in war; it is victory on the battle-field that gives the decision, but its effect is far more dependent than it used to be on world-economic factors. These factors are to be traced through the whole of this War.

To be sure, modern times had already witnessed one great economic war. The American Civil War of the sixties of last century arose out of the economic antagonism between the trading and industrial States of the North and the cotton-growing States of the South of the Union. In the latter, cultivation by the aid of slaves formed the basis of the industry, and to this extent the slave question was a factor in the dispute. It was not, however, until later that the demand for the abolition of slavery found wide expression in the North and was utilised as a welcome means of stirring up feeling against the South. The real points at issue were that the Northern States wanted high protective duties, while the Southern States wanted to facilitate export, and that the Northern States had a special interest in utilising the customs revenues for investments which should above all be of advantage to their trade, but which

were a matter of indifference to the South. The American War of Secession, like everything else American at that time, attracted little attention with us. Germany was still only a geographical conception; there could be no question of a world-policy for its component States. Moreover, our own wars of 1864, 1866, and 1870-71, claimed all our attention. Yet, different as were the cause, the development, and the other conditions of the American Civil War compared with the present World War, the economic factors which in each case found expression have engendered more than one similar phenomenon. The Northern States endeavoured at the outset, by the aid of their imposing fleet, to cut off the Southern States, which had no battle-fleet worth mentioning, from their sea-borne supplies, and, also, on land, from the Mississippi and the corn-growing States of the South-West, and thus pa-

ralyse them economically. The valour of the Southern troops, who were far inferior numerically, as well as of their generals, and, above all, the distinguished leadership of Lee, for four years rendered impossible the accomplishment of this so-called "Anaconda plan," until the Southern States finally succumbed to the blockade.

Things never quite repeat themselves in history. But we may learn from history. Not in order to be more prudent another time, but in order to be wise for all time, as Jacob Burckhardt says. In this sense, the American Civil War might have furnished us many a hint which was left disregarded. But we must confess, as Professor Bernhard Harms said in a lecture, that in August, 1914, we found ourselves confronted with the problem of conducting a war governed by world-economic considerations without immediately comprehending it. To be

sure, our opponents too only gradually perceived the true situation. The operations which they had begun extracted only little by little the full advantage of the world-economic situation, which was favourable to them and unfavourable to us; they did so only when they met with an unexpected force of resistance in the Central Powers. But in any case, in our military conduct of the War, we drew the necessary conclusions from the world-situation, and were at pains to turn it to account by means of a far-reaching organisation.

In every domain only the War itself could be the great teacher in regard to these hitherto unknown effects of world-economics upon its range. It was generally taken for granted that a long war was in these days hardly practicable. For England it was "a commercial war with a view to her own enrichment and the annihilation of her chief

rival.”¹ Nevertheless, even England did not at the outset reckon for a war of such long duration. Only when it became apparent that the forcible annihilation of her “chief rival” by the aid of her Allies was not to be accomplished did England find herself compelled to make considerable additions to her fighting forces, and finally to adopt the system of universal service. Lord Kitchener was prompt in grasping the situation, and, by erecting a strong army, put the country in a position to sustain a long war.

Even Field-Marshal Count Schlieffen, for all his farsightedness, though he insisted that the frontal attack would produce no decisive result, but that the campaign would drag itself out, declared in the article already referred to:

“Such wars are, however, impossible at a time when the existence of the nation

¹ Dr. Georg Solmssen. *England und Wir!* Lecture delivered at Cologne, November 13, 1916.

is based upon the unbroken continuance of trade and industry, and the machinery which has been brought to a standstill must be set in motion again by a speedy decision. A strategy of exhaustion becomes impossible, when the maintenance of it demands milliards from millions."

This frontal wearing down of forces in entrenched warfare has none the less taken place on most sections of the fronts; but we have reaped positive results only from the war of movement. The present-day world has, contrary to expectation, proved itself capable of enduring a long war, though at the cost of such destruction as humanity has never before experienced. The expenditure of milliards would to be sure have been avoided, if we had succeeded, as Count Schlieffen in the same argument goes on to suggest, in conducting the attack on a large scale against the front and both flanks of the enemy, and in developing it to a sweeping

victory. We did, in fact, achieve several local victories of this nature, but we did not achieve such a victory at the Marne with our whole western army at the beginning of the War. It is fruitless to picture to oneself how, if the case had been otherwise, events might have developed in detail, but we may confidently assert that a complete German victory at the Marne in September, 1914, would have given quite another character to the whole War, and would certainly have shortened it very considerably. From this may be seen the full significance of a decisive military success, even in a war so influenced by world-economics as the present.

II

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF NATIONAL AND MASSED WARFARE

IN the course of the present World War the soul of a war waged by means of great national armies has revealed itself as something special, something hitherto inexperienced. Its origin may be traced back to the time of the French Revolution. The *levée en masse* of the French Republic is, to be sure, to a great extent legendary. It furnished hardly a quarter of the anticipated man-power. Clausewitz¹ remarks justly:

“If the whole War of the Revolution passed over without all this making itself felt in its full force and becoming quite

¹ General Carl v. Clausewitz. *On War*, vol. iii., p. 101. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, Ltd., London. [*Vom Kriege. Skizzen zum VIII. Buch*, 3 Kap. B.]

evident; if the generals of the Revolution did not persistently press on to the final extreme, and did not overthrow the monarchies in Europe; if the German armies now and again had the opportunity of resisting with success and checking for a time the torrent of victory—the cause lay in reality in that technical incompleteness with which the French had to contend, which showed itself first among the common soldiers, then in the generals, lastly, at the time of the Directory, in the Government itself. After all this was perfected by the hand of Buonaparte, this military power, based on the strength of the whole nation, marched over Europe, smashing everything in pieces so surely and certainly that wherever it encountered only the old-fashioned armies, the result was not doubtful for a moment.”

Yet Napoleon waged his victorious wars with a prætorian army. Only at

the period of his decline did he utilise the national strength to a fuller extent. After the overthrow of his army in Russia, he made what were for those days enormous levies in France, amounting in all to 1,237,000 men. Even at the time when his power was increasing, it was not so much the strength of the armies which he placed in the field that decided the issue as the fact that the other States were not at that time in a position to make good their losses by a continual requisitioning of the national strength.

The French people did not by any means flock enthusiastically to the Imperial flag. After the repulse of the invasion of 1792, their warlike ardour had been more and more extinguished. In the case of the increased levies of the last year of the First Empire, it was necessary to resort to violent measures in order to carry out the conscription. Hence, though the Napoleonic army was

supported upon the national strength, it was never a national army in the true sense of the term.

On the other hand, the designation "national army" exactly applies to the Prussian army of the War of Liberation. The population of the diminished and impoverished Prussian State at that time numbered less than five millions, and of this number the Prussian army included in August, 1813, not less than 271,000 men. Moreover, the recourse to the provinces for the organisation of the *Landwehr* gave the army a special character. By the retention of universal military service even after the war, the Prussian army was differentiated from the armies of other States. In Prussia alone, after the great campaigns of the beginning of the nineteenth century, did a genuine fusion take place between nation and army. But even in 1870-71 the strain upon our national strength for

the purposes of war was nothing like as great as in the present World War. We entered upon the Franco-Prussian War with the advantage on our side, and therefore it appeared to many unnecessary to requisition the national strength more extensively than had been done hitherto.

Only reluctantly did Roon accede to Moltke's demand on December 8, 1870, for further supplies of troops, which were rendered necessary by the growing extension of the theatre of war and by the mass-levies of the Republic in the second period of the war; and yet how modest appears this demand compared with the conditions of the present day. It amounted only to the calling up of fifty-seven Landwehr battalions which were employed at home for guarding prisoners or for coast defence, and the transfer to Alsace-Lorraine of a number of reserve battalions. This proposal, emanating from the Chief of the General Staff, was to be sure the

result of the increasing difficulties which the national war in France was causing, but although even at that time nation was contending against nation on French soil, yet the armies of the Republic consisted only of masses of men hurriedly scrambled together, who were again and again routed by the onset of the German troops, which, though far inferior in numbers, were vastly superior in fighting efficiency. Thus even the 950,000 men whom France still had under arms at the conclusion of the war could not alter the fate of the country.

“Gambetta believed,” writes Arthur Chuquet,¹ “that the legendary marvels of 1792 and 1793 could be repeated. He overlooked the fact that it was the cowardice and lack of discipline of the volunteer forces of the First Republic which were mainly responsible for the defeat of the revolutionary armies, and that the

¹ *La Guerre 1870-1871*. Paris, 1895.

Republic at that time was saved, not by the heroism of its troops, but by dissension within the coalition."

The campaign against the army of the Second Empire had demonstrated the superiority of our own army based upon the principle of universal military service. The campaign against the Republic revealed the hopelessness of the resistance of a completely improvised militia to disciplined troops. Nevertheless, no really new points of view in the realm of war psychology were revealed in this instance. Quite otherwise was it in the case of the American Civil War. Here the Southern States were very soon compelled to resort to universal military service, and the Northern States to raise larger and larger volunteer levies, with a longer term of service. Like every other civil war, this was steeped in the hatred of both parties. In the Southern States the reaction of

the national character upon military efficiency was revealed very clearly. They continued their resistance to the utmost limit. But Europe, up to the outbreak of the World War, had not witnessed any such phenomena in war. It was the adoption of universal military service by all the Great Powers, as a result of the German victories of 1870-71, which first introduced a new element into the conduct of war. This inevitably made itself all the more perceptible when the increased facilities of communication of modern times rendered the nations more closely coherent within their own borders and more accessible to the suggestive influence of the Press for good as well as for ill. That men have always been susceptible to suggestion is demonstrated by the spread of religious fanaticism, but the present age has increased this susceptibility still further. Even distinguished minds are subject to mass-

suggestion, as is shown in the case of numerous distinguished scholars and artists among our enemies. Neither judgment nor good taste availed to prevent them from joining in the general orgies of hatred directed against everything German.

Among the factors which have contributed in recent times to increase this susceptibility of the masses must be counted the political elections, which have everywhere stirred up passions and prejudiced sound judgment. They alone explain many events which have taken place in America. In the several States there are over twenty offices which have to be filled annually by means of public elections. And in these it is not the personal opinion of the voter that counts, but the party politicians and their whips. It is the ingenuity and unscrupulousness of the latter, as well as their expenditure of large sums of money, that decide the

issue. It is, in fact, in the great democratic republics that we find the worst form of moral servitude. The widely-diffused but superficial education of the masses renders them peculiarly open to suggestion. The sense of unity of whole nations has been considerably enhanced by the fact that in present-day warfare the entire population is involved either directly or indirectly. The countries as a whole are implicated economically.

In 1914 for the first time France opposed to our national army an army organised upon the basis of universal military service; an army, moreover, in which hatred against everything German had been kindled by the assiduous fostering through decades of the agitation for a war of *revanche*. The overwhelming impression of our initial successes, which had by no means been anticipated when Germany was attacked on all sides, inflamed these passions still further. The

Swiss writer Stegemann, in his history of this War,¹ suggests that it may have been suspected in foreign countries that the preparedness of Germany's army and navy, which had been achieved during long years by infinite labour and feverish activity, was merely apparent and was associated with a degeneration of nervous force.

"To this suspicion the campaigns of this War have furnished a heroic answer. When the order of mobilisation was published, all trace of nervousness vanished. Even from a distance one could perceive the power and energy of a military organisation which was suddenly called from its tranquil development to perform the most exalted achievements. This gave nourishment to the theory that Germany had intentionally provoked the War. The thoroughness in execution which was really due to the character

¹ Vol. i., p. 100.

and constitution of the nation was misconstrued as the deliberate provocation of war."

As a result of the thoughtless adoption of *franc-tireur* methods of warfare in Belgium, with the support and approval of the authorities, the War acquired from the outset still more of the character of a struggle of nation against nation. The principle that war is directed only against the armed strength of the enemy-State and not against its population could not under these circumstances be upheld by our troops. They found themselves compelled to resort to severe measures of retaliation. Thus the War acquired a character of brutality which is otherwise very alien to the nature of our well-conducted German soldiers.

The self-assurance of the French army, which had already begun to waver, was restored after the Battle of the Marne. Subsequently the French authorities left

no stone unturned in order, with the aid of a corrupt and lying Press, to sustain the confidence of the nation in an ultimate victory. The continued augmentation of the allied English army, the alleged inexhaustible reserves of Russia (in spite of all the defeats which she had suffered), the entry into the War of Italy, and, later, of Roumania as Allies, the munitions furnished by America, and finally her open partnership against us—all this had to be utilised again and again to strengthen the tissue of lies which France wove round herself more and more closely, so closely that the French finally lost all sense of truth. Thus the French army is inspired, even if not consciously so in all its members, with the feeling that it is not only a question of freeing the native soil from a hated invader, but also of a struggle for the future world-position of France. The characteristics of the French soldier have always been a

product rather of his race than of any military training. They explain the devotion and the contempt of death with which whole divisions have hurled themselves forward again and again in dense masses in hopeless attempts to break through.

The French national character exhibits striking contradictions. High and noble qualities exist side by side with base impulses. The French soldier exhibits heroic courage side by side with the instincts of a "*Nettoyeur*," and, in the treatment of our prisoners, his conduct has been worthy of an apache. The French officers have completely lost that chivalrous sentiment which as late as 1870 found expression in the words of an old Frenchman: "The person of a prisoner is sacred." The French, both white and black, and their women no less, have not scrupled to jeer at and ill-treat our prisoners in the most flagrant

manner, and the Government of the Republic has in general furnished an example of unworthy treatment of prisoners. The naturally amiable and, under ordinary circumstances, good-natured Frenchman easily degenerates, as a result of his excitable temperament, into the very opposite. The history of the wars of religion and of the Revolution affords evidence of the fact. The human beast is always roused in him with surprising suddenness. His characteristic light-heartedness engenders in him a disinclination to think things out to a conclusion. This renders him very susceptible to influence, and prevents him from seeing through the tissue of lies presented to him in the newspapers. While the Frenchman had always displayed military aptitude, his training in time of peace upon the basis of universal military service had only still further developed his good military qualities, and he has

never exhibited those failings which formerly and often erroneously have been attributed to French armies, such as lack of endurance in difficult situations, the inability to endure defeats, susceptibility to panic. The effect of universal military service has manifestly been to discipline the whole nation, and to furnish an appropriate vessel for its always very strongly developed sense of unity. Those who judged the French nation by the customary standard of former days have been astonished at their conduct in this War.

As England has developed into a Land Power only in the course of this War, it has been only by degrees that warlike enthusiasm has infected the masses of her people. England, great as have been her feats of organisation, has never been able to make up for the advantage with which France entered the War owing to her possession of universal military service. Since she took her time, and the

nature of entrenched warfare made it possible, England was able, however, to furnish her numerous new formations with a training which was lacking in the armies of Gambetta. Nevertheless, the new English divisions could not attain either the coherence of the old troops of the expeditionary army first dispatched to France or the fighting value of the French troops. The English reached a high degree of technical efficiency, but their fighting tactics remained defective. Also, for all that tough courage peculiar to the Englishman, they lacked that spirit which can be engendered only by the consciousness of a lofty national purpose such as that for which the French were fighting. In place of her voluntary army England gradually built up for herself on French soil a national army; but, voluntary army or national army, it served only the ends of English politics and the economic war against Germany.

If the purpose of the War played only a minor part in the case of the voluntary army, it played a very considerable part in the case of the national army. If this purpose was not presented clearly and comprehensively to the understanding of every individual, the maximum amount of effort could not be expected from this army. In stirring up and working upon the feelings of the masses, England in fact showed no more scruples than France. Though the Englishman is less excitable by temperament, he is all the more obstinate in clinging to a notion which has once taken root in his mind. This stirring up of hatred has in his case, too, engendered distressing excesses as regards the treatment of German prisoners. In certain cases, even if not as a general rule, the English have shown themselves not behind the French in brutality.

Thus we had to wage war against enemies who were under the influence of a

mass-psychosis. This has engendered phenomena such as Europe had not witnessed since the time of the wars of religion. Deeds of horror and senseless rage of destruction, such as are described for us in *Simplicissimus*, have again made themselves manifest. The notion that humanity as a whole had advanced spiritually was proved to be an error. The vast distance between civilisation and *Kultur* was clearly revealed.

After the Thirty Years' War an effort was made to alleviate, by careful training of the men, the horrors of war due to the outrages of the military rabble. Thus it was asserted in praise of Prince Eugène of Savoy that in the neighbourhood of his camp the peasant could till his field unmolested. Instead of war being made to feed itself, a complicated system of supplies was adopted. The result was that the war strategy of the weak voluntary armies of that time became fixed

more and more into a conventional mould, from which Frederick the Great was the first to emancipate it, so far as the limited means available at that time rendered this possible. Subsequently, under Napoleon, war developed more and more into "true war," to use Fichte's expression. This transformation, however, could be fully effected only by means of universal military service. Universal military service holds sway over our age and for generations will not vanish. To it Prussia-Germany owes her advancement, and it was inevitable that, when all the Great Powers adopted it, the violence of war should again be augmented. We must not let the bright side of universal service blind us to its dark side. Henceforth the passion of war infected whole nations, and this passion was constantly inflamed anew by contact with that of the enemy. Therewith many of those barriers were overthrown by means of which

the professional soldiery, preserving the chivalrous customs of the Middle Ages, had sought to check the excesses of war. Also the barriers which International Law had sought to oppose to the encroachments of war collapsed in the face of this new violence.

At the same time factors were introduced into the World War which could not fail to react upon the strategical and tactical conditions and which it will be impossible to disregard in the future. They call for a new standard in measuring the efficiency of armies. Thus the efficiency of the German troops far surpasses that which might have been expected according to the standard of earlier times. Even in regard to the operations at the Loire at the turn of the year 1870-71, the late Field-Marshal Freiherr von der Goltz wrote in his *Reminiscences*¹:

¹ *Die Operationen der 2. Armee an der Loire.* Berlin, 1875. E. S. Mittler und Sohn.

“With the exception of a few stout hearts, everyone was sick of even the most successful battles. The fire of war still burnt, but with a dim and flickering light. The craving to enjoy at length the longed-for term of tranquillity was very widespread.”

In these words is reflected the effect of an exhausting triumphal progress which the second army had pushed into the heart of the enemy country. Here, in fact, the thought might well intrude: Have we not now had victory enough? And yet at that time less than five months of war had elapsed, and the course of the war had been extraordinarily successful. The troops had not undergone anything like such tremendous experiences as they have had in the present World War. In this War the consciousness that our national existence is at stake has raised us above ourselves.

All of us, leaders as well as men, have

human weaknesses, and assuredly not all German soldiers are heroes by nature. But it is precisely in this—in the fact that the weak are carried along with the strong—that the educative force of this struggle for the existence of Germany is revealed. The weak could not do otherwise than strive to be heroes. Reverses, such as were occasionally inevitable in this long and tremendous War, have doubtless had a temporarily depressing effect upon the troops, and after efforts and a consumption of nervous force such as have never been experienced in any previous wars, the craving for rest has sometimes made itself felt. But even in the third year of the War, the fire of war did not merely flicker with a dim light, but was constantly rekindled to fresh flame. In Transylvania and Roumania and in Eastern Galicia in 1917 the troops displayed an ardour equal to that of the first days of the War. The magic

of victory enabled them to defy all the difficulties of the ground and all the inclemencies of the weather. They would not, of course, have been a national army, linked to the homeland by a thousand ties, if they had felt no desire for the conclusion of a long war, a war demanding ever fresh sacrifices, and if a calmer feeling had not taken the place of the enthusiasm of the first months. But it was just such a feeling that was necessary for the accomplishment of such gigantic achievements in the West and in the East. What was wanted was not enthusiasm, but the living heroic sense of duty on the German soldier. Moreover, there exists in our army a cool contempt for danger, such as elsewhere has only been exhibited in picked professional armies, and yet ours has remained a national army in the best sense of the word.

Clausewitz declares¹:

¹ *On War*, vol. i., p. 47. [*Vom Kriege*. I, B., 3 Kap.]

“If we look at a wild warlike race, then we find a warlike spirit in individuals much more common than in a civilised people; for in the former almost every warrior possesses it, whilst in the civilised, whole masses are only carried away by it from necessity, never by inclination.”

None the less, the inculcated sense of duty, the conscious will of the whole people, when, as in the case of this War, it is a question of safeguarding our most treasured possessions, and when the purpose of the War is clearly manifest, has brought forth even loftier achievements than mere warlike impulse, or, as in the case of the Japanese, the sense of the blessedness of extinction.

In fact, we cannot sufficiently express our joyful recognition of the high sense of duty and the power of resistance which our troops have everywhere displayed in the face of overwhelmingly superior

forces, while at the same time we ought not to refuse our respect even for our enemies, above all the French. For they too were prepared and resolved every one to die for his country. On both sides was revealed a nervous force, a capacity of resistance to inclement conditions, with which no one had credited the civilised humanity of the present day, more especially in the face of the increased effectiveness of present-day weapons. Before the War it was looked upon as an understood thing that the efficiency of the older classes of recruits was only limited. Field-Marshal Count Schlieffen, who taught us how to manipulate a massed army, and who, because he was convinced of the great importance of numbers in war, was unwilling to abandon the employment of the older drafts in the front line: none the less declared, "Landwehr and Landsturm, territorial army and territorial army reserves, can only to a

very limited extent be reckoned as part of the nation in arms."

If the World War has not confirmed this prediction, it is due to the fact that such imponderable things defy any attempt to assess them. Hence it is not to be wondered at that we encountered surprises in these matters. The improved hygiene and treatment of wounds of the present day have contributed greatly to maintaining the efficiency of the national armies. In the case of Germany, above all, medical art and science have achieved wonders. They have succeeded in preserving our army from those epidemics which have been the scourge of previous armies and in restoring to it almost 90 per cent. of its wounded. Only by their aid has it been possible to maintain continuously the full strength of our troops and to carry on the war for so long.

The Russians have afforded us less cause for surprise than the rest of our

enemies. True they brought up their masses earlier than had been anticipated, but these, as was to be expected, proved themselves very unwieldy, so that the superior mobility of our troops helped to restore the balance. Their unshaken resistance to the Russian mass attacks did the rest.

With the introduction of universal military service in the year 1874, the Russian army had acquired quite a new character. In place of the old soldiers with their long term of service, whose regiment had been their home, there were now levies of troops subject first to a six-year and later to a four-year and three-year term of service. Many conditions which had formerly contributed to the efficiency of the Russian troops were now abolished. The subordination of the peasants disappeared more and more, but it could not be replaced by that conscious and enlightened sense of duty

which is possible only in an old civilised nation. If the Russian army was found wanting in Eastern Asia, this was due above all to the fact that it proved incapable of adapting itself to the conditions of modern warfare. It afforded no opportunity for the training of the individual soldier to self-reliance in war. In his report to the Tsar upon the Manchurian campaign Kuropatkin said:

“Undoubtedly, universal military service has, from a moral standpoint, improved the mass of our troops, but in view of the low standard of civilisation of the individual men, it is difficult to infuse them with the notion of discipline. Belief in God, devotion to the Tsar, love for the Fatherland, still contribute to keep the soldiers firm in the ranks, and to make them brave and obedient fighters, but these feelings have in recent times been severely shaken and

forcibly wrested from the heart of the Russian."

The unpopularity of the war against Japan was, in the opinion of the General, chiefly to blame for the often very defective resistance of the troops in battle. He writes:

"To-day more than ever, the moral strength of an army is governed by public feeling. Therefore, in order to be successful, a war must be popular, the whole people must strive for success in harmony with the Government. But the aims which we pursued in the Far East were understood neither by the Russian soldiers nor their officers."

In 1914, on the other hand, this condition was completely satisfied: at the beginning, the war was extremely popular in Russia. Moreover, the Russian army had learnt much from the Manchurian campaign, both as regards organisation and also as regards strategy and tactics.

It had been systematically organised and prepared for the war against Germany and Austria-Hungary. Nevertheless, the defects in the political organism of the Empire and in the national character could not be remedied in a decade. Kuropatkin expressed his conviction that, in a war against Germany and Austria-Hungary, Russia would certainly in the first instance be defeated. Only with time did he hope for a turn of the tide, thanks to the inexhaustibleness of Russia's reserves of men. His respect for the superiority of German training led Kuropatkin, when he was Minister of War, to declare that a war of conquest against Germany would be a calamity for the Russian Empire. The World War, no less than the March revolution of the present year, though in a different sense, has revealed that Russia was not really ripe for universal military service. Had it been otherwise, we and our allies might

have been unable to defend ourselves against envelopment by overwhelmingly superior numbers.

More than once did the Austro-Hungarian army threaten to succumb before the far superior numbers of the Russian forces. At the beginning, the Austro-Hungarian army proved not strong enough to defeat the main body of the Russian forces in Galicia. Certainly the troops showed no lack of heroic self-sacrifice, and the engagements of August and September, 1914, furnished signal instances of the splendid courage of the army of the Dual Monarchy, which was in fact filled with glowing enthusiasm for this contest of giants. Naturally, in view of the mixture of races comprised in the Dual Monarchy, it could not be kindled through and through with a common ardour to the same degree as the German army. Such a unity of sentiment as existed with us was impos-

sible in its case. The Austro-Hungarian military leaders had to cope with difficulties arising from the mixture of races comprised in their forces, difficulties which did not exist in the case of ourselves or our opponents. Moreover, these brave troops had to suffer for the sins and omissions of which the Parliaments of the Monarchy had been guilty during past decades. The army was too weak in numbers, and equipped with far too insufficient an artillery, to enable it to resist successfully the Russian hordes and at the same time to cope with the Serbians. The weakness of their regimental *cadres* in time of peace had rendered impossible the training for actual battle-tactics. This fact was bound to result in a certain lack of unity and cohesion in the larger units.

If the Russians, in spite of their great numerical superiority, did not succeed in smashing the brave Austro-Hungarian

army in the autumn of 1914 at Lemberg and on the San, that speaks for the small ability and defective mobility of the Russian army, which, it is true, made progress in these respects in the course of the War. As a result of the reckless expenditure of the Russian troops, whose leaders were always spendthrift of the lives of their men, their army remained, notwithstanding their heavy losses and the defective training of the reserves, a redoubtable adversary.

In spite of all the technical improvements of the present day, the moral element proved to be, now as ever, the decisive factor in war. In the case of the Central Powers, that lofty moral strength, arising from the sense of righteous self-defence in a war which had been thrust upon them, showed its superiority to the zeal which a commercial and predatory war could kindle in our enemies. The following words of Droy-

sen¹ completely apply to the German nation:

“Certainly it is not the fortune of war which decides the question of right and wrong between States, but to succumb in the struggle for existence is evidence of disorders or weakness such as history does not forgive. Wealth and size and abundance of material resources are not sufficient. There are other and ethical factors which ensure and achieve victory: a deeply inculcated docility, an order and subordination such as give shape to the mass, a discipline such as renders it fit for use and self-confident even under failure, an emulation of all the noble passions such as steels and braces the soul, together with a strong will to direct the whole, and power of thought to point the way to the desired goal.”

¹ *Preussische Politik*, V.

III

THE INFLUENCE OF TECHNICAL SCIENCE

NOTWITHSTANDING the decisive importance of the moral factor, we must not fail to appreciate the great significance of technical science in the present War as regards the effectiveness of weapons, protection against these weapons, organisation of transport and intelligence services, and also aërial warfare. It could not reveal itself fully until this War. In peace we had rather suspected than actually realised it, for any testing of it on a large scale, let alone on such an enormous scale as the World War has witnessed, was out of the question. The Russo-Japanese War did not reveal it to anything like the same extent; hence the instruction which that war furnished

could give but a feeble conception of what might be expected in the sphere of technical science. Moreover, in the decade following upon the Manchurian campaign, technical science underwent an increasingly rapid development.

The importance of railways as an instrument of war was early recognised by Moltke. He always kept an eye on their development. Up to the beginning of the World War, the mobilisation of the German forces by rail in 1870 was looked upon as a phenomenal achievement, and rightly so, when we consider the very meagre development of our railway system at that date. Nevertheless, at that time less than half a million Germans had to be dispatched to the frontier, as compared with something like one-and-a-half millions in the year 1914. Also the transports within the Empire after the mobilisation were more than three times as numerous as

those of 1870. Moreover, the transfers of troops during the operations themselves, which in 1870-71 took place on both sides in France, appear insignificant by the side of those effected during the World War. In the separate theatres of war movements of transports have been constantly effected, and at the same time the railways have been utilised for manœuvring purposes. The one-time notion which attributed a certain rigidity to railways as compared with progress on foot, because the latter could be deflected at a moment's notice in any desired direction, has now lost much of its force. In spite of the rigidity of the railway tracks, we have always contrived to dispatch the transports in accordance with the requirements of the military command. Whole armies have been transferred from one theatre of war to another, as was essential for the Central Powers in a war conducted on several

fronts. Previous wars have, of course, from time to time, furnished instances of a similar utilisation of railways, for instance the American Civil War, and the War of 1866, in which strong contingents of the Austrian Southern Army were dispatched over the Alps to the Danube and back again to the north of Italy. When in 1866, after Königgrätz, we were threatened with the intervention of France, Moltke contemplated the transport of the Prussian troops in Moravia to the Rhine. Nevertheless, as regards the distances to be traversed and the mass of men and materials to be conveyed, never until the present War have such demands been made on the railways.

The enormous numbers engaged in the War involved a very high degree of dependence on the railways. Even in 1870-71 the German second army (which at that time comprised only three army

corps) experienced at the Loire the serious inconvenience of not having adequate railway communications in their rear. At the present day, the unhampered development of operations in the war of movement and a secure maintenance of positions in entrenched warfare are only possible if the bringing up of munitions, stores, and men, and the removal of the wounded, as well as the systematic organisation of the whole sanitary service, are ensured by means of the railways. Only from time to time has it been possible to dispense with them by having recourse to motor wagons; but the latter have never really furnished an adequate substitute for railways.

Moreover, the notion that railways were not to be relied on as an instrument of war, because they could be so easily destroyed, has proved itself untenable. This was entirely applicable in the case of the destruction of railways in 1870,

but present-day technology has always found means to remove such difficulties with comparative speed and to make the lines serviceable again. Where special difficulties presented themselves, as for instance in Macedonia in the late autumn of 1915, operations have been unavoidably brought to a standstill.

In his history of the autumn campaign of 1813,¹ Lieutenant-General Friederich attributes the overthrow of Napoleon principally to the fact that the manipulation and the mutual reinforcement at the right moment of the various divisions in Saxony, Silesia, and the Mark, on the Lower Elbe and in Bavaria, of a French army numbering in all more than half a million men could only be possible with the aid of railways and the electric telegraph. The armies of that day had already outgrown the technical resources of their age. If we consider that, after

¹ Vol. iii., p. 401. E. S. Mittler und Sohn.

Napoleon himself had returned to Dresden from the pursuit of the main army of the allies which began on the 28th of August, it was not until the 3d of September that he was fully informed of the defeats of Oudinot at Gross-Beeren and of Macdonald at the Katzbach with all their consequences, and was able to form a decision adapted to the circumstances, and this within a circuit of from thirty to sixty miles from Dresden, which was all the area that the disposition of his troops extended over at that time, we perceive the great obstacles which opposed themselves in those days to the joint direction of independent bodies of troops, even when the distance between these was comparatively insignificant.

Even with the introduction of railways and of the electric telegraph, these difficulties were not yet surmounted, owing to the deficiency of the technical organisation and the inadequate equipment of

the troops. On the eve of the battle of Königgrätz, there was no telegraphic connection between the main headquarters at Gitschin and the second army of the Crown Prince of Prussia. The command to join battle, dispatched at midnight, was delivered to the headquarters of the second army at Königinhof at four o'clock in the morning of the 3d of July by the aide-de-camp, Lieutenant-Colonel Count Finckenstein, who had thus accomplished the night-ride of twenty-five miles by way of Miletin in four hours. Even the campaign of 1870-71 furnished numerous instances of defective and inadequate telegraphic connections. On the other hand, in this World War, telephones, telegraphy, and wireless telegraphy have placed the transmission of orders and news on a very much more secure footing. The telephone has been able to convey orders and information into the very midst of a battle. Rides like those

of Count Finckenstein on the night before Königgrätz have been replaced by journeys in motor-cars, and orders have been thereby transmitted with greater safety and far greater speed. Moreover, by means of motor-cars and railways, verbal consultations between the leaders or their deputies have been rendered possible. The conduct of the operations as a whole has been placed on a far securer footing as compared with former days, as a result of the technical resources of the present day. And this was very necessary in view of the immense numbers and the vast distances which now had to be coped with. If technical science had been still in the same condition in which it was in 1870, the manipulation of armies and troops at the present day would have been a hopeless undertaking. But however valuable as regards the conduct of operations has been the aid furnished by the

resources of modern times, it could not completely overcome the very great difficulties which had to be faced. Now as ever, war is the domain of frictions and uncertainty.

The hitherto untried weapon of war furnished by aircraft brought about a number of new phenomena. The dirigible airship, valuable as it has proved for reconnoitring at sea, has given way before the aeroplane in land warfare. The Zeppelins are extraordinarily sensitive. They have to keep at considerable heights, because they provide very large targets. This reduces the accuracy with which they can aim bombs. They also need a large expenditure of labour and materials and they have to be housed in sheds. The brilliant invention of Count Zeppelin provided a weapon which, especially at the beginning of the War, was of great moral importance, and was also of indisputable value, because with

the Zeppelin we got over to England; but in this sphere also the large fighting aeroplane has taken its place. The importance of aeroplanes has considerably increased since it has become possible for them to keep at heights of far more than 3000 metres, thereby reducing the danger from gunfire directed against them from the ground. German industry furnished our aviators with such an equipment as enabled them to establish more and more their superiority in the air. Aviation obviously has a great future. Its possibilities of development are many.

The aeroplane proved itself a valuable means of reconnaissance, in connection both with strategy and tactics. In addition, the captive balloon, with its more uninterrupted observation, rendered valuable service. Further, the photographs taken from aeroplanes furnished valuable assistance to the military command, above all in entrenched warfare, where other means

of reconnaissance could not be employed. By their aid, every alteration in the dispositions of the enemy and all the organisation behind their front could be clearly made out. In the war of movement also rapid aeroplanes have been extensively used for reconnaissance. This comprehensive survey of the enemy was something new. Cavalry had never been able to achieve anything comparable to it, even in former times, when their opportunities for reconnaissance were not restricted by the effectiveness of the weapons employed against them to anything like the same extent. Just as formerly cavalry engagements took place at the front of the lines for the purpose of routing the cavalry of the enemy and thereby gaining a view of their positions, so now air engagements take place on both sides with the aim of gaining a view of the enemy or frustrating a similar attempt on his part. Moreover, air-

craft render very notable services in direct co-operation with the infantry as well as in the observation of artillery fire. The French at a very early stage accustomed themselves to the use of aircraft for observation, a plan which has since been imitated by us with constantly increasing success.

Not only did aeroplanes make excursions over the enemy lines for purposes of reconnaissance, but also for purposes of bomb-throwing. Not only were the enemy harassed repeatedly by the bombing of their quarters, their camp, their munition dumps and other establishments, but also troops concentrating for an offensive were attacked in this way with satisfactory results. Moreover, by raids into the enemy country carried out by squadrons of aircraft, we were able to inflict damage on fortifications, sources of military supplies, and other military establishments. In the course of these

raids some unfortified places without military significance have had to suffer. The bombardment of these places is in itself objectionable, but the limits of what is permissible are in this matter in many ways elastic. A new weapon opens up its own paths, as is shown, for example, by the submarine war. In any case, in this contest of nations with its economic background, the War is turned more and more against the enemy countries, and the principle hitherto accepted that war is made only against the armed power of the enemy is, in this case as in other spheres, relegated to the background.

In regard to the weapons which have proved most effective in the hands of the infantry, this World War, incredible as it may appear, has witnessed to a certain degree a retrograde development. The opposed forces, although equipped with long-distance rifles, were brought so close to one another, that they had recourse

to the naked steel, and the hand-grenades of a past age were once again revived, though in an improved form. To be sure, instances occurred in the Russo-Japanese War, where the contending parties were for long periods in very close proximity to one another, and also in the Boer War many of the battles were fought, at any rate in part, at very close range; but the general tendency was to regard these as exceptions and to explain them as the result of local conditions or of the national characteristics of the contending parties, and to reckon the normal range of infantry fighting as from 800 to 400 yards. Even with such an imperfect weapon as was the needle-gun compared with the present-day magazine rifle, Moltke in 1865 unconditionally gave to firearms the first place as regards effectiveness. He wrote¹:

¹ *Einfluss der verbesserten Feuerwaffen auf die Taktik. Taktisch-strategische Aufsätze*, p. 59.

“Attack with the bayonet is the means with which finally to vanquish the enemy; no soldier will wish to abandon its use. The confidence of the men in the naked steel cannot be sufficiently aroused and encouraged, but its application must have been made possible by the previous course of the fight and have been prepared for by means of effective gunfire. . . . If the bayonet contests so frequently described in French accounts of the Italian campaign of 1859 were stripped of their dramatic glamour, if we could ascertain the simple prosaic truth, it would have to be admitted in reference to by far the greater number of them that the enemy had already been demoralised by more or less considerable losses and shunned a genuine encounter.”

Even prior to this date¹ the Field-Marshal wrote:

¹ *Kriegsgeschichtliche Arbeiten III. Der Italienische Feldzug des Jahres 1859*, p. 258.

“General Niel, it is true, ascribes his victory (in the Battle of Solferino) to the bayonet. It may be resorted to whenever the attack has been pushed to a struggle of man against man. As a general rule, this only occurs when it is presupposed that the opponent will not accept battle.”

We have already explained the psychological factors which come into play in the World War and embitter it in a manner which had not to be reckoned with in the time of Moltke. The Field-Marshal, moreover, could not foresee when, in the essay we have quoted, he cited a few instances taken from the Wars of Liberation, in which attacks were made with clubs and bayonets “under conditions in which firearms could not be effective,” that such conditions would, at a future date, present themselves repeatedly upon fronts extending for miles.

As with hand-grenade fighting, mine-warfare too suffered a kind of resurrection in entrenched warfare. In the siege of Port Arthur it had already once again played an important part. It was only natural that from the moment that the operations took on the nature of a siege all the available weapons should be brought into play, both those which had been utilised previously and improved by the aid of modern technical science, and also those of recent invention. Thus, for warfare at close quarters, flame-throwers, bomb-throwers, the trench-mortars of earlier days in an improved form, trench cannon and muskets came into use, while the machine-guns acquired a growing importance, corresponding with their great increase in numbers. With the introduction of appliances for blowing gas from reservoirs and of gas-grenades, entirely new weapons of war made their appearance. And these in

their turn called for special means of defence in the shape of gas-masks. The English and the French sought to prepare the way for their attacking troops by the employment of battle-motors—the so-called tanks. Altogether, this War, as a result of the development of modern technical science, has led to inventions and improvements such as no previous war has ever witnessed. It will always redound to the special glory of German industry, and above all of Germany's chemical industry, that in this sphere it engaged in and carried through a struggle against the industry of the whole world. The supplies of artillery ammunition which had been provided for the War proved in the case of all the belligerent States to be very far below the requirements. Especially in the late autumn of 1914, our troops found themselves more than once in a critical situation as a result of this shortage. None the less,

it was impossible that such immense supplies as were actually required should have been stored up in peace time. Our industry, however, succeeded in satisfying to an ever-increasing extent the demands which had to be made upon it; it was able, by its unaided effort, to keep pace with the enormous supplies which poured in to our enemies from America and (in the case of Russia) from Japan.

As a result of the manner in which the positions were more and more adapted to the ground or artificially concealed, high-angle-firing artillery gained in importance. At the beginning we possessed in our numerous mobile heavy high-angle-fire batteries a certain superiority over the French, which, however, they were able in part to make up for by the extremely skilful use and appropriate grouped disposition of their artillery. Later on in the War, the French and the English brought into action guns of very heavy

calibre, which hurled immense quantities of shells against our trenches.

These trenches, both with ourselves and with our enemies, and both in West and East, assumed more and more the character of fortifications, fitted with quickly manufactured wire entanglements such as only modern industry could have been equal to supplying in such enormous quantities. This fact, taken together with the astonishing successes which our heaviest high-angle-fire artillery and also the motor-impelled Austro-Hungarian howitzers achieved against the Belgian and later against the Russian fortresses, has given rise to the idea that in future fortified trenches will take the place of fortresses. In any case it is certain that the old-fashioned fortresses are worthless, and, moreover, that the earlier notion, handed down from the Middle Ages, that positions had to be secured by means of fortresses, must finally

be discarded. It has long been among the things which have been outgrown. As early as 1809 Napoleon wrote¹: "Fortresses like cannon are only weapons, which cannot of themselves fulfil their purpose; they must be properly manipulated and applied"; and in 1806 he said² that in the construction of fortresses the same principles were applicable as in the disposition of troops. Fortresses are intended to assist operations, and since the course of the latter can never be foreseen with absolute certainty, it might seem to be the best plan to construct them during the war wherever they are required. That, however, would be going too far. It will not be possible to dispense with certain previously prepared fortified points at places where only defensive tactics can be employed.

¹ Corr. XVIII., No. 14707. Notes sur la défense de l'Italie.

² Corr. XIII., No. 10726.

The fortifications on the French eastern frontier, above all Verdun and the fortified Moselle front, have demonstrated how valuable these may be. When the insufficiently-manned and widely-separated fortifications of the French eastern frontier in 1814 were described by those who opposed the notion of an invasion of France by the allies as "the impregnable front of France," this was a very great exaggeration. A century later, however, it became an actual fact. Even the powerful effectiveness of our heavy and heaviest artillery did not avail at Verdun to enable us to take the works everywhere by storm in the further course of the attack, a proof that skilfully constructed sunk fortifications, when they are favoured by the character of the ground, now as ever may be of great value.

On the other hand, the practice of fortifying large towns seems now to have

become obsolete. They had long lost their significance as centres of fortifications, and in future they will have such significance only as places of refuge in the midst of fortified zones. Such fortified zones will still be required, in the sense that certain frontier districts will be secured by means of a succession of permanent forts which must be constructed and maintained in time of peace, and to which must be linked certain other works to be taken in hand on the outbreak of war, and for which the necessary materials must be in readiness. It is a question of constructing not a continuous *Limites Romani*¹ which only affords a mainly immovable defence, such as was several times forced upon us by circumstances during the World War,

¹ The name of a continuous series of fortifications consisting of castles, walls, earthen ramparts, etc., erected by the Romans along the Rhine and the Danube, to protect their possessions from the attacks of the Germans.
—*Translator's Note.*

but a succession of central points of defence, and this not in the shape of fortified towns, but of entrenchments of important areas. The World War has, as we shall explain, on the one hand confirmed anew the old truth that only by means of attack can decisive results be achieved, and that the war of movement and not entrenched warfare is the thing to be aimed at. On the other hand, it has revealed the immense power of a defence based upon well-constructed fortifications, in view of the effectiveness of modern weapons; and this revelation—more especially in view of our central geographical position—is of great value.

IV

LEADERSHIP

IN view of the development of modern technical science, it was inevitable that the World War should exhibit many characteristics different from those of earlier wars. None the less, it would be a great error to declare all the experience gained from previous wars to be out of date. The human intelligence attaches itself involuntarily to what lies nearest. Those who turned to account the experiences of the Boer War and of the Manchurian campaign would have benefited by a warning against one-sidedness. We have already drawn attention to the fact that, notwithstanding the power and effectiveness of modern weapons, now as ever it is the moral element that is finally

decisive in war. The same is true of the intellectual element, of leadership. If the leaders were unwilling to consult the experiences of earlier wars, they would fall into a hopeless one-sidedness. As in every department of practical life, it is a question of finding the true relation between knowledge and capacity. Clausewitz expresses it exactly when he says¹:

“He who intends to move in such an element as war must bring with him nothing at all gained from books save the education of his mind; if he brings with him ready-made ideas which have not been inspired in him by the shock of the moment, which he has not generated out of his own flesh and blood, the rush of events will overthrow his building before it is completed. He will never be understood by natural men and will enjoy least confidence precisely among

¹ Vol. vii. *Feldzug*, 1812.

the most distinguished of them, that is to say, those who know themselves what they want."

Thus the instruction gained from the past must be further developed and adapted to present-day conditions. This was done for his age by Moltke in exemplary fashion. When he became the Chief of the General Staff he was already advanced in years, and although he possessed abundant practical experience and a comprehensive technical training, he had had no experience of European wars on a large scale. Hence he derived his opinions inevitably from the Napoleonic wars, and he could do so without detriment. The masses of troops which he had subsequently to command were no larger than the armies of the last wars of the First Empire. The army corps of 1866 and 1870 still corresponded to some extent to what to-day has already reached the dimensions of an army or

army-group. Moreover, the difference between the military weapons of Moltke's day and those of the previous Napoleonic era was less than the difference between those of our day and those of 1870, though the introduction of breechloaders and rifled barrels had even at that day marked an important advance in the technique of arms, and Moltke did in fact form a just estimate of their influence upon tactics.

The war of 1870-71, like every other war, was not without its surprises. The importance of massed rifle-fire was only revealed by the effect of the chassepots of 1870. Indeed, Moltke himself, in his orders to the commanding officers of 1869, recommended that the lines of sharpshooters should not fire till they were at a distance of 300 paces from the enemy, with the exception of the troops especially designed for long-distance firing. On the morning of the 18th of August,

1870, the leader of the third army corps, Lieutenant-General von Alvensleben, expressed himself as follows to the commander of the first division of the foot-guards, Major-General von Pape:

“The chassepot fire has been underestimated, and also to some extent the mitrailleuses. It is impossible for us to make any progress as the result of tactics practised on the drilling-ground; we must have more manœuvring; we must develop and make use of even the most insignificant cover in the open country; above all we must employ our artillery long and continuously.”¹

The fire of the breechloaders of small calibre proved very much more effective still against the English in the South African war. When they had been repulsed at Paardeburg on the 18th of February, 1900, with heavy losses, Lord

¹ *Studien zur Kriegsgeschichte und Taktik*. V. Der 18 August, 1870, p. 407.

Kitchener said the next day: "If I had known yesterday what I know to-day, I should not have attacked the Boers in the river-valley; it is impossible in the face of the modern rifle."

The fact that exercise in time of peace does not afford any real test of the effectiveness of the enemy's fire will play an important part at the opening of every campaign. Even the most perfect military training cannot protect us against the element of incalculability which confronts us in this field. It can only satisfy to a limited extent the demands of the case.

In the sphere of instruction, Field-Marshal Count Schlieffen, no less than Moltke before him, even if, like the latter, he could not foresee the phenomena which the present War has engendered down to their every detail, none the less was always at pains to discipline and prepare the mind of the nation with

a view to the demands of present-day war. For instance, in 1909, when he had already retired from office, he wrote:

“One direct consequence of the improvement of firearms is a greater extension of the fighting-front. Thus it has come about that while, in the battles of the last two centuries, all weapons and reserves included, on an average ten to fifteen men were reckoned to a metre of battle-line, and even forty years ago ten men to the pace was the ordinary reckoning, in the war in Eastern Asia of 1904-5 three men to the metre, or in case of need even less, was the ordinary rule. Neither of the contending parties entered the war with a fixed theory as to the extension of the fighting-fronts, or endeavoured to apply the notions which he had formed in time of peace. The long fighting-fronts have been the result of the force of circumstances and of the natural desire to take cover and at the same time

to secure the full effectiveness of first-rate weapons. Beyond doubt, therefore, the phenomena which made their appearance in the Far East will be repeated in a European war. The battlefields of the future, therefore, will and must be of quite a different extent from those which we know from past experience. Armies of the same strength as those of Königgrätz and Gravelotte-St. Privat will occupy more than four times the space that they occupied at that day. But what will the 220,000 men of Königgrätz and the 186,000 men of Gravelotte signify, as compared with the masses which will certainly take the field in a future war!"

The tendency in the direction of vast numbers was in fact exhibited on all sides in the World War to a very striking degree. Count Schlieffen recognised at an early date that this was bound to happen. Our successes in the World War

have been to a large extent due to his untiring efforts to train the General Staff and our higher command for a war of masses. His successor, Colonel-General von Moltke, adhered to the fundamental ideas of Schlieffen. Thus the beginning of the campaign in the West in August, 1914, developed in the main in accordance with Schlieffen's views. If at that time no decisive victory fell to our share, and our strength proved insufficient to vanquish France, we must none the less consider that up to the Marne we had achieved enormous things.

"In the very moment of accomplishment the completion of the battle was abandoned for far-reaching general reasons. . . . The battle was broken off by the German Supreme Command, and, in view of the general situation, a strategic retreat to a new line was ordered."

This is the judgment of a neutral

writer¹ on the Battle of the Marne, and certainly it would have taken very little to turn the scale so that the victory might have fallen to us and a retreat been avoided. But the really decisive factor was that the German offensive was no longer strong enough to break through in the face of an enemy country bristling with armaments. The withdrawal of the German armies after the dazzling successes which had been achieved at the beginning could not but in the nature of things cause bitter disappointment at home. It ought, however, to be borne in mind that, if Moltke was able to achieve a Metz and a Sedan, he none the less had at his disposal forces considerably superior in numbers to those of the enemy, since, at the beginning of the war of 1870, the numbers of the German forces as compared to the French were in the ratio of 5 to 3. At the beginning of the War

¹ Stegemann, *loc. cit.*, i., 211.

of 1914, on the other hand, the armed force of France alone was slightly in excess of the whole mobilised strength of Germany, while if we deduct the German forces employed in the East and those which were in the first instance kept at home for coast defence, the French, English, and Belgians possessed a numerical superiority of something like three-quarters of a million men. In addition to this, when the German Western army engaged in the Battle of the Marne, its original first-line troops had been reduced not only by two army corps which had been sent to the East, but also by two further army corps which it had been necessary to leave behind at Antwerp and Maubeuge.

It is the old phenomenon of the wearing down of forces in the course of an offensive which we here encounter anew. In the autumn of 1805 Napoleon crossed the Rhine and the Main with more than

200,000 men; at Austerlitz he engaged with only 75,000. At Eylau, out of the 200,000 men which he had at his disposal after the arrival of the contingent of the Rhenish Confederation in North Germany, he could send into action only 60,000 men, not to speak of the rapid dwindling away of his great army in Russia in 1812. In spite of the considerable superiority which we possessed in 1870-71 at the beginning of the war, and of the fact that the total strength of the German troops which gradually crossed the French frontier, amounted, all told, to 1,147,000 men; in spite of the enormous successes which we achieved at that time; none the less, owing to the unexpectedly long resistance which France with the aid of her new formations opposed to us, we found ourselves more than once, during the second period of the war, faced with a very serious and critical situation. A powerful offensive, aiming

at the overthrow of the enemy, has almost always led up to a situation in which it was proved to lack the necessary troops in order to pursue its purpose to the end with complete security. Clausewitz expresses this when he says: "Every attack must lead to defence."¹

Napoleon, when he was still General Buonaparte, insisted once to General Moreau, on the importance of numbers as a decisive factor in war.² He said: "Victory falls in the final event to the biggest battalions." Moreau is said to have retorted that this was quite correct in itself, but that in point of fact Napoleon himself had just proved in Italy that superiority of numbers does not always decide. "Does it not often happen that numerical superiority is compensated for by bravery, experi-

¹ *On War*, vol. iii., p. 4. [*Vom Kriege. Skizzen zum VII. B.*, 2 Kap.]

² Pierron, *Méthodes de guerre*, I.

ence, discipline, and, above all, by the talent of the leader?" To which Buona-
parte replied: "In a battle, certainly,
but in a whole war seldom." Victories
used up armies slowly but just as surely
as defeats.

Thus the German offensive at the beginning of September, 1914, was not powerful enough to effect the overthrow of the enemy. The intention was to effect an envelopment from two sides. The envelopment by the left wing of the army, was, however, brought to a standstill before the fortifications of the French eastern frontier, which, in view of the prompt successes achieved against the Belgian fortifications, it had been hoped to overcome. The envelopment of the French left wing was successful up to in front of Paris and across the Marne, but here the German troops found their frontal advance arrested, while they in their turn were threatened with an en-

velopment. The defensive tactics of the leaders of the French army were rendered very much easier owing to the strong support which the fortifications on the eastern frontier gave to their wing, and also the possibility of effecting rapid transfers of troops afforded by a very convenient network of railways and a very numerous supply of motor wagons upon good roads. Moreover, they commanded the inner, shorter line. At the same time, even apart from this, it was proved on the Marne that the age of armies numbering millions, with their improved armament and the widely extended fronts which they necessitate, engenders very special conditions. On the Vistula and in Galicia in October, 1914, at Lodz and after the winter battle at the Masurian Lakes, as well as in the autumn of 1915 at Vilna, the same phenomena always made their appearance, even though the conditions of extent and

character of the ground, as well as the main course of events, were in each case completely different. Forces which suffice to achieve victory and even to destroy strong sections of the enemy's forces prove inadequate for the attainment of the complete success which is desired. The individual armies of the enemy may be enveloped—as happened at Tannenburg and later at Hermannstadt, where the “Cannae” of Schlieffen was realised, but the envelopment of the whole host of the enemy is a very difficult matter. In order to accomplish it at the Marne, we should have required yet another army, disposed in échelon behind the right German wing, while on the East the possibility of any effective enveloping movement was very much restricted. The vast extent of their territory always made it possible for the Russians to effect a withdrawal. Their railway network, though of wide mesh, was extraordinarily

favourable from a strategic point of view, and by its aid they were generally able to bring up reinforcements at the right time to any wing that was threatened, while, in the case of ourselves and our allies, our railway communications were not only very circuitous, but, when it came to a further advance, ceased altogether. In addition to this, with the extension of the Eastern theatre of war, a blow inflicted on one wing of the Russians could not have the same effect on the other sectors of their long front as would have been the case if it had been of less extent.

Hence break-through tactics, which Napoleon attempted several times on the restricted battlefields of his age, supported by powerful heavy artillery, once again asserted their importance. Instances of this were furnished at Gorlice, in the later battles in Galicia, as well as between the Bug and the Vistula, in the breaking

of the Russian Narew front in the summer of 1915, and in the break-through at Tarnopol in 1917. Also the Serbian and above all the Roumanian campaigns furnished several similar instances. The preliminary condition of success was always a moral and tactical superiority on the side of the attacker, and a corresponding violence of mass effect. The fact that we did not possess this moral and tactical superiority in sufficient measure in the West has always relegated to the background the idea of breaking through the enemy front. What has to be done is not only on a comparatively limited front to break in upon the enemy with concentrated masses—these masses will immediately be exposed to outflanking on both sides—but to force in a more or less considerable part of the enemy front, and then to develop strategically the break-through which has succeeded tactically. The extent of the success

will in every case depend upon the local conditions and the strategic situation.

The importance of envelopment, both strategic envelopment and tactical envelopment, of course remains very great. Clausewitz says¹: "A complete victory requires an enveloping attack on a battle with an oblique front, for these two forms always give the result a decisive character." Moltke furnished proof of this at Königgrätz, Metz, and Sedan. Schlieffen, who made it his chief object to keep the desire for the annihilation of the enemy alive in the German army through the long period of peace, developed in his "Cannae" the conditions for a battle of annihilation on classical lines. Even if, as the World War has shown, his doctrines frequently have to be modified, when they are applied to conditions of very large scale, none the less this War too has

¹ *On War*, vol. iii., p. 155. [*Vom Kriege. Skizzen zum VII. B., 2 Kap.*]

furnished instances where the envelopment of a whole host might have been effected and would have had very far-reaching consequences. Such an opportunity was presented to our opponents on the Western front after the Battle of the Marne. By making use of their convenient and efficient railway network and their numerous columns of motor wagons, they might have hurled at the proper moment powerful forces against the right flank of the German army and thereby prevented us from establishing our positions on the Aisne and to the west of the Belgian frontier. Since, however, they had not achieved a tactical success at the Marne at all, they lacked the strength and the capacity for such an undertaking. They pressed their attack only in a frontal direction. The German forces at once resumed in part an offensive attitude, and by this means arrested the progress of the enemy forces

opposed to them. They strengthened the right wing of their army, and were always able to oppose adequate forces to the striking movement of the French pursuing army when the latter at length (but too late) set itself in motion, and this even though the railway network in Belgium and North France had not yet been restored to anything like full efficiency.

After the Battle of the Marne, the War in the West assumed on the German side first of all the character of a defence accompanied by offensive tactics, and subsequently, after the attack at the Yser had proved unsuccessful and when further troops had to be conveyed to the East, was completely transformed at the end of November, 1914, into an entrenched war. It ought, however, to be realised that though in the World War entrenched fighting has gained such prevalence and importance, this is not necessarily a result

of the highly developed technical science of our age, but first and foremost the result of the inability of our enemies to break through the German fronts in the East and the West. If the armies of the two contending parties had been equally efficient, it would have been impossible for us to maintain our positions for any length of time, in view of the overwhelming numerical superiority of the forces which were directed against ourselves and Austria-Hungary from all sides. It lay with our opponents with their vast numbers, when they had forced us to retreat, to give to the War once again the character of a war of movement. They did not succeed in doing so. On the other hand, the forces of the Central Powers were insufficient to enable them to push the offensive to any considerable extent beyond the permanent positions taken up on the Western front at the end of 1914 and on the Eastern front in the

autumn of 1915, and on their side to pass once more to the war of movement. This was reserved in the further course of events for the Serbian and (a year later) the Roumanian theatres of war. In view of our central position, we were obliged, since we had not succeeded in breaking through at the Marne, to content ourselves with an "offensive with a limited goal," to use the words of Clausewitz. He says further: "A defence which is organised on conquered territory has a much more irritating character than one upon our own soil: The offensive principle is engrafted on it in a certain measure."¹ The course of the World War has quite confirmed this. But at the same time this view involves the admission that the maintenance of such a defence ought in itself to be considered as an important success. Apart from

¹ *On War*, vol. iii., p. 72. [*Vom Kriege. Skizzen zum VII. B.*, 26 Kap.]

this offensive defensive, the only possibility for the Central Powers could be to anticipate the enemy's actions in particular cases, as was done by our army at Verdun and by the Austro-Hungarian army in the Venetian Alps; the initiative as a whole we were obliged to leave to the enemy. Consequently, we were driven to the tenacious, to a large extent passive, retention of our entrenched lines, and to their consolidation with the aid of every means furnished by the art of field-fortification.

According to the notions that prevailed up to that time, the possibility might have been considered, where our troops were suffering heavy losses as a result of holding on under exposure to the fire of the enemy's heaviest artillery and bomb-throwers, and where the latter had done destruction to our trenches, of allowing the enemy to break through, and then driving him back again by means of the

reserves at the back of our lines. This procedure was, in fact, from the beginning employed several times with success at various sections of the front against bodies of the enemy forces which had broken through. To extend it systematically to larger sections of the front, and thereby on our side to resort to a certain extent to the methods of the war of movement, seemed to the Supreme Command for a long time inadvisable, in view of the limited forces and artillery at their disposition. Experience had, moreover, shown how difficult it is to straighten out salients which have once been formed on an entrenched front. Even when salients have been enveloped, they have, by the very nature of modern methods of fighting and effectiveness of weapons in entrenched warfare, been held both by ourselves and by our enemies, in so far as the nature of the ground made this possible.

The more and more insistent attempts of our enemies to prepare the way for their infantry by the mechanical power of bomb-throwers and heavy artillery led to a different method of defensive fighting. The German Army Report of the 17th of April, 1917, describes it briefly in the following words:

“In the presence of modern artillery fire, which flattens out positions and produces broad deep craters, rigid defence is no longer possible. The struggle is no longer for a line, but for a whole deeply écheloned fortified zone. So the contest for the foremost positions surges this way and that, with the aim, even if it involves the loss of implements of war, of saving the lives of the men, and at the same time of weakening the enemy by inflicting on him severe and sanguinary losses.”

This procedure preserved the lives and at the same time the *morale* of the troops,

who now no longer saw themselves to the same extent as hitherto exposed without means of defence to the devastating fire of the enemy. The enemy could be allowed to boast of his slight local successes, if only his attempts to break through were frustrated. It remained none the less a prerequisite condition of this new procedure that adequate reserves of troops for the counter-thrust, as well as munitions, should be at hand. Deficiencies in both these respects were revealed more than once in the defensive engagements of the years 1915 and 1916 on the Western front.

It did not seem advisable to leave large sections of the front open to the enemy with a view to subsequently meeting him in a great offensive engagement on the French or Belgian territory occupied by us, thereby giving the situation quite a different character from a strategic point of view. Such a counter-

attack on a large scale would have involved the reconquest of the newly-organised enemy positions, and if the counter-attack did not effect a complete recovery, this method would in course of time have amounted to the surrender of larger and larger portions of the enemy territory occupied by our troops. To be sure, many of our positions exhibited serious defects, since their selection was not the result of forethought and a free choice; they were situated wherever our own or the enemy's attack had been brought to a standstill in the autumn of 1914. Moreover, quite apart from the moral factor, which in these days of extreme publicity has quite another significance than was formerly the case, and apart from the endeavours of the enemy Press to exploit for their own ends even our most trifling reverses, such reverses as were inevitable from time to time, the objects at stake were far too

precious to justify us in yielding up large stretches of territory, even if it were only temporarily. We had to strive to turn to the best possible account the productive district of Northern France, with its wealth of industries.

The shifting back of portions of our front in the district of the Ancre, the Somme, and the Oise at the end of the winter of 1916-17 did not take place until the situation as a whole had been to a certain extent transformed, and after we had been able to prepare stronger and more favourable positions in the rear. This evacuation of the front line took the enemy more or less by surprise. Our skilfully executed withdrawal resulted in considerable losses to the enemy when they subsequently pressed forward, while we gained time as well as greater security and husbanded our forces. Moreover, it was only the most westward projections of our

front which were concerned in this withdrawal.

According to Clausewitz, war must be subject to the one supreme law of decision by force of arms. In this sense did Frederick the Great, Napoleon, and Moltke conduct their operations. With them it was a question of the annihilation of the enemy's forces, not of the winning and keeping of provinces. If the entrenched battles of the present War had for their purpose the holding of ground that had been won, none the less the implied contradiction with the theories of the greatest generals of modern times is only apparent. In the World War it was a question of battle-fronts which we held and in contending for which our opponents sacrificed the blood of their troops, and not of a cordon of positions after the fashion of those of the eighteenth century. The entrenched lines of that time served principally to

keep the enemy at a distance, and as far as possible to obviate a pitched battle. Considering the inadequacy of the means of attack at that time and of the old hired armies, as well as the inferior mobility and deficient driving force of a linear *ordre de bataille* they frequently fulfilled their purpose.

When, however, war was dominated by the will of a powerful leader, it took on immediately quite a different aspect. Nevertheless it must not be overlooked that even Napoleon frequently advocates entrenched positions, and that he himself at times, when his troops had been brought to a standstill, had recourse to them, for instance in 1807 at the Passarge, and in the autumn of 1813, when, though his defence remained mobile, he constructed extensive temporary fortifications on the Elbe. Frederick the Great, too, finally adapted himself to a Bunzelwitz. Already at the conclusion of the

campaign of 1758, he admitted¹ that to attack the enemy without having first secured for oneself a superiority as regards firearms would be much as if a mob armed with cudgels were to engage an armed military force; that it was necessary to adopt the Austrian system of a powerful artillery, however inconvenient this might be; and that lessons might be learnt from the enemy in regard to the skilful exploitation of the ground.

“The best infantry in the world,” he said, “may in certain cases be thrown into disorder, when it has to contend against the enemy, his guns, and disadvantages of ground. Our own infantry, enfeebled and demoralised alike by victories and defeats, demand to be sparingly employed for difficult undertakings. One must be guided by a consideration of their intrinsic worth.”

After the Seven Years' War, the King

¹ *Betrachtungen über die Taktik*, etc.

gave even more emphatic expression to these views in the military section of his *Politisches Testament vom Jahre 1768*. In this he says: "We must reckon upon the possibility of a mere contest for entrenched positions (*Postenkrieg*) with the Austrians"; and he says further:

"Formerly victories were won by the courage and strength of an army; now it is always the artillery that decides, and the skill of a general consists in bringing up his troops against the enemy without allowing them to be crushed before the beginning of the offensive proper."

Although the conduct of war at the time of Frederick the Great, being based upon entirely different political and economic conditions, was quite different from our conduct of war, none the less it engendered many phenomena, as is proved by the King's observations, which have been repeated in the present World War, though in a different form. In

any case it is clear from the words of King Frederick that both during and after the Seven Years' War he was constantly at pains, pen in hand, to attain clearness with regard to the most important questions of the military art. We may well see in this an exhortation that we should apply to every innovation that is to be introduced the touchstone of the experiences of previous wars, if we desire to be preserved from one-sidedness.

Hence it would be wrong to maintain that, in the future, entrenched warfare must necessarily play such a dominant part as it has played in the present War. Even King Frederick speaks of an entrenched war against the Austrians only as a consequence of their skill in choosing favourable positions. That, even in his later years, he still conceded the chief importance to decision on the field of battle is evident from his plans for the

Bavarian War of Succession, and in spite of the inaction which, as it turned out, marked the course of this armed demonstration—for it was really nothing else—here too he had based his chief hopes upon a “good battle” in Moravia.

We shall have to consider how, in future, to preserve for war the character of the war of movement, all the more so since, in the World War, it has only been by the war of movement that we have reaped decisive results. It will, of course, be accompanied by many of the features of entrenched warfare, and, in consequence of the necessity of bringing up and setting in operation the numerous present-day methods of attack, it will be slow. An approximate illustration of this is furnished by the course of the operations in East Prussia and Lithuania and of the Germano-Austro-Hungarian offensive in Galicia and Poland in the summer of 1915, as well as by the

campaigns in Serbia, Transylvania, and Roumania; and the rapid progress of operations in these instances furnishes convincing proof that the resolute will of a leader, combined with the valour of his troops, is capable of overcoming those difficulties which the bringing up of their numerous weapons of war entails upon a modern army. For this kind of warfare we ourselves had received just the appropriate training, and we were in fact superior to all the other armies. Such a form of warfare is decisive, and will always remain decisive; the years which we have spent in our trenches do not alter this fact in any way.

That spirit of the offensive which is peculiar to our army we must study to preserve by every means in our power. It has achieved striking results in this War, and has recently once again proved its effectiveness in the summer of 1917 in Eastern Galicia and in the defensive

battles in North France and Flanders. But we must not lose sight of the fact that from time to time, at the beginning, a systematic adherence to offensive tactics, even where the situation rendered it more advisable to make full use of the strength which the effectiveness of present-day weapons gives to defensive tactics, cost us a heavy sacrifice. In any case the War has proved that the assertion often made in time of peace that the spade digs the grave of the offensive is not correct. This assertion may be compared with the saying which was current in the Prussian army, to its very great detriment, before the battle of Jena: "Skirmishing encourages the scoundrel in human nature." From the military point of view Goethe is right when he says: "For it is just where ideas are lacking that a phrase is most welcome." Catch-words are always prejudicial in their effect, and most of all so when it is

a question of the blood of our sons and brothers. It was not only King Frederick who expressed his sense of the importance of selecting strong positions. Napoleon, the representative of the most uncompromising offensive, told the officers of his engineer-corps in 1806 that in the coming campaign against Prussia he intended that a very great quantity of earth should be shovelled up.¹ And Moltke writes²:

“The offensive is by no means merely tactical. A clever military leader will succeed in many cases in choosing defensive positions of such an offensive nature from a strategic point of view that the opponent is compelled to attack us in them. . . . A strategical offensive consorts very well with a tactical defence.”

It was, it is true, as early as 1865 that the Chief of the General Staff of the

¹ Foucart. *Jéna*.

² *Taktisch-Strategische Aufsätze*. Bemerkungen über den Einfluss der verbesserten Feuerwaffen.

Prussian army wrote those words: "But he belonged to the number of those great and rare men in whose case a profound study of theory has almost been a substitute for practice."¹ Thus Königgrätz, Metz, and Sedan did not cause him to alter his views materially. Again, in 1874, he says:

"I am convinced that, as a result of the improvement of firearms, the tactical defensive has acquired a great advantage (from a local tactical point of view) over the offensive. It is true that in the campaign of 1870 we always took the offensive and that we attacked and captured the strongest positions of the enemy, but with what a sacrifice? It seems to me to be more advantageous only to proceed to an offensive after having repelled several attacks by the enemy."²

¹ Dragomirow. *Skizzen des Oesterreichisch-Preussischen Krieges im Jahre 1866.*

² *Taktische Aufgaben.*

The Field-Marshal certainly did not overlook the fact that such an opportunity of this nature as presented itself to Napoleon at Austerlitz occurs but seldom and cannot be created at will. It is sufficient, then, to draw attention to the fact that any leader who has recourse to defence, wherever this is in conformity with the situation, is showing himself in full agreement with the greatest military leaders of the past.

War is, to quote the well-known phrase of Clausewitz, "the continuation of politics by other means." It has already been mentioned that it has resulted from the political and economic situation that we and our allies have had to wage battle on the two fronts under difficulties which had hitherto not been suspected and which have continually increased. It was this that gave rise to the peculiar form of the present War, as well as to the necessity, notwithstanding the power

of the blows which we dealt, of continually husbanding the forces at our disposal. Hence the judgment pronounced by Clausewitz on the conduct of King Frederick in the year 1760 is fully applicable to our Supreme Command. He said¹: "The whole campaign exhibits a husbanding of forces, accompanied by the greatest activity and skill." Numerous other comparisons with the Seven Years' War present themselves, only that as the theatre of war, in place of the Eastern and Central districts of Germany on which Frederick the Great fought, we must substitute Europe. Just as at that time Prussian regiments fought at Rossbach and a month later at Leuthen, so now our army corps and divisions have fought first in the West, then in the East, then in the Balkans, and *vice versa*. Just as Frederick the Great

¹ Vol. x., *Strategische Beleuchtung mehrerer Feldzüge*. Friedrich der Grosse.

at that time held the inner line, so did we also in the World War. This has proved to be to our advantage (just as it proved to Frederick's advantage), even though the difficulties of the situation as a whole still remained. If, as we hope, policy succeeds in future in preventing the recurrence of such a menacing situation, or at any rate in producing the effect that we shall have greater freedom for violent and decisive blows in one direction, then the War will take a different shape and will be more like former wars.

Our business, therefore, is to maintain the fundamental ideas of war as they lived in the German army up to the year 1914, to soak them in the experiences of the present War, and to make the fullest technical use of these experiences, but to do all this without giving an entirely new direction to our thinking on strategy and tactics. We can only strive continually after perfection;

we cannot attain it. Even King Frederick had to resign himself to this fact. In the Testament of 1768 he writes:

“The military art demands continual study, if one wishes to attain a thorough mastery of it. I am far from flattering myself that I have exhausted it. I am even of opinion that a human lifetime is not long enough in order to pursue it to the very end, because with every fresh campaign I have acquired new views as the result of new experiences, and because there still remain a multitude of things concerning which fate has not permitted me to collect any experience.”

Even less than at the time of Frederick the Great, when conditions remained in all essential respects unchanged, and such alterations as occurred in the weapons of war were insignificant as compared with to-day, can we now tell whether the next campaign will not cause us to form new views. Napoleon once de-

clared that one must alter one's tactics every ten years, if one wished to maintain one's superiority. We proceeded in accordance with this principle prior to the War. Our armaments were at the highest level of efficiency; our service regulations were entirely up to date and adapted to the most recent experiences of war, in particular the experience of the Russo-Japanese war. This in itself is an indication that the World War need not effect revolutionary changes; in fact it is impossible that it should do so. On the whole, our training was quite on the right lines. The wide scope which our regulations always allowed made it easy for the troops to adapt themselves to the needs resulting from the effect of modern weapons. Thus they adapted themselves to the entrenched warfare to which they were unaccustomed and which they disliked. The principles for attacking enemy positions and for the defence

of one's own have, as we have already mentioned, been changed several times, in accordance with the conduct of the enemy and the nature and strength of his weapons. In matters of detail new experiences have been gleaned over and over again, but the fundamental tendency of our regulations has not really been affected. It has been proved they were right in everywhere giving precedence to mind over form, for that adaptability which had been inculcated in our whole army down to the man in the ranks proved decisive. It resulted in the fact that the spirit and the nature of this War were recognised in the army long before they were generally recognised at home.

It is true that during the long peace the army had become very inert in many respects. Innovations were only tardily adopted. Many tried to extract from the regulations a compromise between what was old and past and what was new

and enduring. In this they overlooked the fact that even enduring things will constantly call for improvements. This applies also to the experiences afforded by this World War. They cannot continue indefinitely to be authoritative any more than the experiences of earlier wars, if only because the development of technical science both on the land and in the air can never come to a standstill. Above all, the individual must impress upon himself that a certain partiality must always attach to his own particular experiences. Our troops have exhibited a striking faculty of adapting themselves to circumstances, but the same cannot be said of all their officers; and this prolonged trench warfare in itself has a dangerous tendency to engender a one-sided view. It has also to be remembered that the conditions in the East and the West respectively were entirely different.

A certain inertia, however, in the case of such a great organism as is presented by the army, although it may prove a hindrance on occasion, has also its good side. A certain amount of conservatism is indispensable; it helps to secure a continuous progress, and not a progress by leaps and bounds. We have already shown that the fact that a thing is old is by no means necessarily a reason for discarding it; we have been able to point to many phenomena similar to those of the time of Moltke, Napoleon, nay, even of Frederick the Great. Of course these similarities are only evident when we consider the thing as a whole. The tactics of 1870-71 had become out of date long before the World War, and occasional reversions to them, such as occurred with us here and there before the War, will now have to be renounced once and for all. Within certain limits, however, the phenomena of war repeat

themselves not infrequently, although the form is always altered, and they have to be duly adapted to present conditions.

V

THE ARMY IN THE FUTURE

ALTHOUGH the effect of the World War has by no means been to revolutionise military art completely, none the less it is incumbent upon us to draw from it a number of lessons both as regards the further development of our army and also as regards our mode of training.

From the point of view of organisation it must first of all be realised that no organisation can possibly cover all the possible contingencies of war, and that, therefore, it is of the first importance to make it as elastic and adaptable as possible. In the course of the World War the attempt to preserve the original formations, and thereby to secure the continuous influence of the leaders over

their troops, was found to be impossible of realisation, or at any rate it had to be restricted to the divisions. The latter became strategic units and were correspondingly developed; the army corps became in many cases an army-group, and the number of its divisions underwent constant fluctuation. The question of the expediency of the triple division of the higher units was relegated forthwith to the background in face of the imperative demands of the War. This is by no means a novel experience. Napoleon never hesitated to alter the number of divisions in his army corps. The latter were made up in accordance with the demands of the situation, the personality of the leader, and the number of subordinate units which were available.

The War has demonstrated the necessity of equipping the infantry with a larger number of machine-guns than was provided for by us in time of peace. In

defensive warfare, as we have already pointed out, the tendency has been more and more to husband the reserves of men, and to wage the battle in the foremost line by mechanical means, machine-guns and mines, backed up by the artillery. The field artillery, whose duty it was to work in the closest co-operation with the infantry, required not so much an absolute increase in the number of batteries as an increase in the number of batteries of howitzers. On the other hand, in the case of the garrison artillery, the engineers, the bomb-throwing companies, the railway, telegraph, and motor troops, and the flying corps, a considerable increase has proved to be necessary. It will not be necessary to increase the numbers of the cavalry in the future; but the cavalry will doubtless have to be kept at its present strength, which will perhaps make it possible in a future war to manage with a smaller

force of reserve cavalry, so that the men and horses will be available for other purposes. In face of modern firearms and mass-armies the cavalry is very much restricted in its opportunities for reconnaissance, and to a large extent it has been superseded by the aëroplane. None the less, this long entrenched war, and the fact that in the course of it this valuable weapon has only been employed in the same way as the infantry, must not lead us to form false conclusions. At the beginning of the War, in the West and, later on, in the East (especially in Lithuania), our cavalry have performed very valuable services, and the same may be said in regard to the campaign against Roumania. As soon as the War was carried into the open country, the cavalry at once asserted its importance. It becomes indispensable both as a supplement to aircraft in reconnaissance at close quarters and also as a mobile de-

fensive weapon. Moreover, it is essential to have a swiftly-moving arm which can be rapidly transferred from one place to another. At the same time, in the training of the cavalry in time of peace, due attention must be paid to trench-warfare, and far more attention must be devoted to fighting on foot than has hitherto been the case.

In our great manœuvres the conditions of this World War can only partially be represented. The manœuvres will, of course, be more adapted to the present-day mode of fighting, and since, on our drilling-grounds, trench-digging is only rarely feasible, we shall practise it in the manœuvres, provided that it is in accordance with the situation which has been arranged, and provided that it can be effected without injury to the fields. In other respects, however, it will not be possible to organise our great manœuvres in the future in conformity with the

conditions which prevailed in the great majority of cases in this War. We cannot in our peace manœuvres furnish a representation of trench-warfare on a large scale. All that we can do is to practise attacks on a field-position oftener than has hitherto been the case. Their number and extent, however, must always be comparatively limited by a consideration of the expense which they involve. Hence all that we can do is to give the companies and battalions a thorough training in trench-warfare and make them familiar with all the circumstances which it engenders. In the case of our frontier forces, the requisite training could be combined to a large extent with the construction of new fortifications. This would incidentally effect an economy of civilian labour. Also portions of the troops stationed in the interior of the country might be dispatched temporarily to the frontier for this purpose.

It will always be our task to see that we preserve correct views in respect to trench-warfare, but that at the same time we do not give it the predominant place in our training. The predominant place—it cannot be insisted on too often—belongs to the war of movement, though in a somewhat different form from that with which we were familiar before the War.

In this connection there should be a greater insistence, in our peace training, upon the dragging out of operations which is inevitable in war, provided, that is to say, that this can be done without prejudice to the freshness of the troops and the initiative of their leaders. As early as 1861 Moltke wrote¹:

“If manœuvres are not to engender false notions, full consideration must be given to the ground and the dimensions.

¹ *Bemerkungen über den Einfluss der verbesserten Feuerwaffen.*

The whole course of the battle will thereby become different and slower."

These words, which were written long before 1866, have received very little attention. In an order of King William issued after the Battle of Gravelotte-St. Privat he says:

"I must remind you that the attack on an enemy position must first be prepared for by the artillery and by well-directed rifle-fire. . . . I certainly accord the fullest recognition to the brave assault of the infantry, for whom hitherto no task has seemed too difficult, but I also expect that the intelligence of the officers shall enable them in future to reap the same successes at a much less considerable sacrifice, by dint of a skilful exploitation of the ground, a more thorough preparation for the attack, and the employment of suitable formations."

Similarly, at the beginning of the present War, many of the engagements

might have developed more tranquilly and systematically and at less cost of life, and at the same time have reaped more decisive results. None the less, we may rejoice that the following words of Clausewitz are completely applicable to our infantry: "Happy the army in which an untimely boldness frequently manifests itself; it is an exuberant growth which shows a rich soil."¹ We must endeavour to maintain, by every means in our power, this splendid vigour in attack of our infantry. The infantry must not expect the artillery to do everything; just as little, of course, must it attack prematurely in such a manner as to render it impossible for the artillery to exercise its full effectiveness at the right moment. Hence it will be an important duty of the commanding officers in future peace manœuvres to see that their troops preserve clear notions

¹ *On War*, i., 187. [*Vom Kriege*, III. B., 6 Kap.]

concerning the seriousness, the scope, and the duration of present-day warfare, and at the same time to emphasise continually the effectiveness of modern arms. Co-operation between the infantry and the artillery must in any event be ensured. A good means of achieving this would be to effect a mutual interchange between the officers in command of the infantry and the artillery respectively.

Generally speaking, we must devote more attention to tactics on a large scale, and less to strategy. Above all, even in sham fights and cavalry manœuvres, the important thing is not to spin out great strategic theories, but to develop the power of forming a just conception of purely tactical situations on a simple plan, and to practise the technique of command. Operations on a large scale must be left for the tours of the General Staff—especially the Great General Staff. Certainly it is desirable that just concep-

tions regarding operations on a large scale should also be instilled into the generality of the officers' corps; but in this respect the study of the World War and lectures upon it will afford a rich field of instruction and inspiration. The greatest possible simplicity, such as war demands, must also prevail in regard to the exercises practised on the drilling-ground.

Our traditional drill must in any event remain the permanent imperishable foundation of our training.

"Its importance consists in the fact that it inspires the soldier with a sense of the urgent necessity to obey his officer. The habit of obedience which is developed by means of military service helps to produce this effect."¹

The War has confirmed in the fullest degree the value of drill. We have to

¹ Reisner v. Lichtenstern. *Die Macht der Vorstellung im Kriege*. Berlin, 1902.

thank our permanent military training schools for the discipline which has made it possible to solve the most difficult problems of attack and defence with an array of masses of troops. It is the result of these schools that the German soldier has not recoiled before any task. The best proof of this is the half-reluctant recognition which it has extracted from the enemy.

In regard to the autumn battle of 1915, in Champagne, General Cherfils writes¹:

“The French soldier detaches himself from his officer far too readily. Each one goes where he wills. Thus it came about that our infantry lost in a moment territory which they had just won with great difficulty, and, moreover, they left on it a half of their man-power. The German is a true soldier. Discipline has become a part of his flesh and blood. That is his greatest source of strength.”

¹ *Echo de Paris*, November 23, 1915.

The *France Militaire* writes¹ with respect to the Anglo-French offensive on the Somme in July, 1916:

“The great homogeneity of the German army is evident from the fact that it was possible for the German command to withdraw some twenty different battalions from at least ten divisions, in order that they might oppose these improvised formations to the Anglo-French offensive. And these troops were drawn from all portions of the front. This was, to be sure, only an emergency measure. The Germans certainly would not have had recourse to it if it had not been necessary, and we must try not to bring ourselves into a similar situation, and we must always bear in mind that the maintenance of the formations is an element of victory. At the same time, it is a sign of great homogeneity and of a splendid co-operation between the various com-

¹ July 16, 1916.

mands that it was possible for the Germans to undertake such a manœuvre on such an extensive scale and in the space of a few hours.

“The opponents of a long term of active military service and of thorough preparation in time of peace should consider the following facts: A militia army with an abridged term of training may perform heroic deeds, the regiments may exhibit a high standard of cohesion, but such an army will lose all its strength if circumstances compel it to break up its principal units, and to blend these together. It is only where uniformity of training has penetrated into the lowest ranks, and where a thorough military training has been established, that such venturesome undertakings are feasible.”

In the case of the numerous new formations which the enormous increase of our army in the course of the War has rendered necessary, we have always endeav-

oured, as far as was possible, to compose these new bodies of troops in such a way, and to furnish them with such a thorough training, as would give them the solidity of the old troops. In August, 1914, in the case of the newly-formed Reserve-Corps, we had to endeavour to dispense with these advantages. In their case, the period of training was not really adequate to transform them into thoroughly efficient battle-troops. The experience of the officers, very few of whom were on the active list at the time, with all their good will, was not really adequate, and the same was true in many cases in respect of their physical fitness. This applies equally to a large proportion of the men in the ranks, that is to say, of the young war-volunteers. They had excellent qualities, and were filled with the purest patriotic enthusiasm; but this could not compensate for the lack of soldierly discipline and physical harden-

ing which can be acquired only in the course of a thorough military training. These new troops could not be equal to coping with the difficult conditions which prevailed at Ypres. They have only gradually, in the course of the War, and as a result of the subsequent improvement of their officers' corps, been brought up to the level of the old troops. The Prussian Landwehr of 1813 furnished an illustration of exactly the same thing. They broke down, at the beginning of the campaign, at Goldberg, Kulm, and in the pursuit after the battle of Katzbach; it was not until Wartenburg and Möckern, and after they had been very much diminished in the process, that they had become thoroughly efficient troops.

Scharnhorst, their creator, had not originally contemplated the employment of the Landwehr as a troop of the first line. It was only necessity which led to the enrolment of the Landwehr among

the field-troops; just as in August, 1914, necessity compelled the German command to throw in on the right wing of the Western army troops which were not yet fully trained.

The zeal of reformers, after the defeats of the year 1806, undoubtedly contributed to make the difference between the old and the new in the Prussian army appear much greater than it actually was. Scharnhorst and his disciples frequently overshot the mark deliberately, in order to attain their purpose, for they were under the necessity of overcoming a host of prejudices on the part of those who adhered to the externals of the Frederician tradition, and not to its inner significance. This, however, does not in any way alter the fact that it was really the resuscitated old Prussian army, though filled with an entirely new spirit, that we have to thank for the liberation of 1813. It was the same much-abused officers'

corps, the "Junkers" of the year 1806, who led to victory an army the best parts of which were composed of veteran soldiers. The great achievements of the army of 1813 in the face of the enemy were due to the excellence of its *cadres*, and the same was the case a century later. The achievements of the War of Liberation, like our ability to hold out in the World War, were only rendered possible by the fact that a sufficient number of experienced officers and veteran soldiers were available, for even the men of the home and reserve regiments of 1813 had for the most part already served in the old army.

The value of the so-called "Krümper" system introduced by Scharnhorst has been hitherto very much exaggerated. It can by no means be described as a successful attempt to manage with a short term of service on a large scale. The principle of it was the creation of a

war reserve which should always be available, by means of a constant furloughing of a number of men to the districts from which the regiments had been drawn and the insertion of recruits in their place. Nevertheless, in the brief period between 1808 and 1813 (during which, moreover, the mobilisation of half the standing army for the auxiliary corps which had to be supplied for Napoleon's campaign of 1812 against Russia was a disturbing factor) this system proved incapable of furnishing anything like such a strong war reserve as that which in 1813 made it possible, in addition to filling up the ranks of the regular troops, to create fifty-two reserve battalions, which were assembled in regiments during the truce. By far the greater part of the imposing reserve force which was available in the provinces consisted of soldiers who had received their training in the old army and had been subjected to its rigid discipline.

The words of Camille Rousset¹ in reference to Napoleon's new formations of the year 1813 are more or less true of every improvised army:

“If the Battle of the Katzbach had been fought by stout men and thoroughly trained soldiers, it is possible that Macdonald would not have been defeated, or at any rate would have suffered only such a reverse as could have been made good again; fought as it was with young men and with soldiers whose training dated from yesterday, it became the beginning of a catastrophe. No clearer demonstration has ever been furnished of the power of physical and moral energy, of fortitude of body and spirit in the face of inclemency of the weather, hunger and thirst, and all the sufferings of war, the power, in fact, of that stoicism which is no sudden phenomenon, but the gradual and unconscious result of military train-

¹ *La Grande Armée de 1813*. Paris, 1871.

ing, which is in fact nothing else than a heightened sense of honour and duty."

The American Civil War of the sixties of last century would not have lasted four years if the Union had had at its disposal an efficient fighting army with which to overcome the Southern States. Both the militia and the volunteer levies broke down. Only after a long time did they become really efficient fighting troops.

Lord Kitchener's creation of a strong English army during the World War was unquestionably an immense achievement. He built up twelve divisions out of the six regular divisions existing before the War, and twenty-eight divisions out of the fourteen very imperfectly organised territorial divisions. This doubling of the hitherto existing English army was then supplemented by the thirty so-called Kitchener divisions. All these new formations, before they were put into the line, went through a long period of train-

ing, first at home and afterwards behind the front in France. The long entrenched warfare afforded the possibility for this. They were only by degrees sent into the fighting lines. Not until the beginning of 1916 were the English in a position to take over longer sections of the front, which had hitherto been held by the French. They were subsequently reinforced in France, and at the beginning of 1917 their lines were extended still further towards the south. Thus, though the great English army of the World War is a new creation, it is anything but a loose and hasty improvisation. The experience which could be derived from military history in respect to improvised armies was, on the contrary, thoroughly taken into consideration by Kitchener in accomplishing his task. The advocates of a shorter term of service than existed among us before the War cannot in any case instance the Kitchener di-

visions as a justification of their views, any more than they can do so in the case of our own new formations during the War or those of earlier times. Moreover, it has to be considered that the Kitchener divisions were trained exclusively for the simple tasks of trench-warfare. The English army is by no means fit for a war of movement. Captured English officers have admitted this fact. Their higher officers lack the necessary knowledge, which can be acquired only by long training and by regarding it as a life-task. Napoleon said, not without reason, "It is possible to capture a strong position by means of a young army, but not to conduct a campaign to a victorious conclusion."

In regard to the abridgment and simplification of our Infantry Regulations there may be various opinions. The War certainly furnishes a great deal of instruction on this subject. Military drill in

itself is, however, prejudicial to war-efficiency, and consequently a hindrance to true preparation for war, only when it is carried to excess, that is to say, when the insistence upon formal drill is pushed beyond the limits of the Regulations. Provided that this is avoided, military drill—the War has proved it beyond any doubt—is entirely beneficial as regards training for active service. In regard to the latter, in a short time and by equally simple means, the same degree of subordination cannot be enforced under all conditions; for though undoubtedly much of what the infantry soldier has to learn in respect to the use of the rifle in warfare may be drilled into him, yet the Regulation of 1906 (No. 158) expressly indicates as the aim of the individual training of the rifleman that “the soldier should be trained to become an intellectually self-reliant and technically conscientious rifleman,” for on one point

there can be no doubt, namely, that training with a view to actual fighting must always take the first place, great as is the value of rigorous drilling in achieving this end. This training engenders in the troops the habit of doing their best, and hence of doing it even in the face of danger. It helps them, too, to acquire that "proud and distinguished appearance" which was insisted upon by Prince Frederick Charles.

Here as everywhere, the real question is how much importance is to be conceded to formal drill. The important thing to be kept in mind is that drill is to be considered, not as an end in itself, but only as a means to an end. It is inevitable that it should happen from time to time that a few individual pedants, who, moreover, have not kept the prospect of war steadily in view, should go astray. It will be the duty of the superior officers in charge of these matters to see that

these deviations do not lead us too far away from the proper goal of all training. It will be their duty to see that it does not happen that—to use a phrase of Scharnhorst —“the mechanical heads triumph,” and they must constantly bear in mind that success in war falls only to him who is capable of emancipating himself from the bonds of custom when the occasion demands.

We must not carry too far our cult of tradition. Blind adherence to tradition in the place of a living continuous development is an evil. A great and proud tradition is a wonderfully invigorating thing in an army, and nothing can take the place of it, but it ought not to be nurtured for its own sake, but for the sake of the firmness and stability which it gives to the army as a whole.

The years of exhaustion which followed the great war-period at the beginning of the nineteenth century were not calcu-

lated to inspire a warlike spirit in the Prussian army and to shape its training with a view to the needs of war. Hence a pronounced tendency in the direction of review tactics very soon manifested itself. This phenomenon has frequently occurred after wars of long duration, and it is easily understandable. But it is all the more important that we should be on our guard against its reappearance. The ambition of Frederick the Great to see that "admirable discipline" of his troops, which had become relaxed in the course of the Seven Years' War, once more restored allowed him to overlook many an extravagance which the resurgent drill-devil provoked in the army. His own thoughts, as his later writings prove, were always concerned with the needs of actual war and the most glorious side of the soldierly profession, but his generals became more and more immersed in the minor arts of the drilling-ground.

The uneventful course of the Bavarian War of Succession was not calculated to diminish the pedantry of peace drill.

The tendency in the direction of review tactics, which again became predominant in the first decades following the War of Liberation, had begun to manifest itself in a peculiar way during the war, even in the Prussian army, and first of all in the Guards. It was our brotherhood in arms with the Russians which resulted in the marked predominance of parade drill (as though it were not a means to an end, but in itself the end of training), and with it a tendency to triviality. The manœuvres in the environments of Berlin were, under Frederick William III., merely spectacles; they degenerated for the most part into mere military sports. The Tsar Alexander and his brothers all took the same unspeakable delight in military pedantry, and it could not but happen that, in view of the

intimate ties of blood and friendship which existed between the Courts of Petrograd and Berlin, similar tendencies should have been transmitted to Prussia. Thus that training which had been originally derived from Prussian models, though endowed with greater rigour after the manner of the Tsar Paul, which, moreover, was organised entirely with a view to outward show in a manner quite opposed to the old Prussian models, was reintroduced into Prussia in this distorted form.

Under Scharnhorst's general rules for manœuvres on a large scale, pre-arrangement of the course the manœuvres were to take was declared to be inadmissible; but, after the great war-period, parade manœuvres, the critical moments of which were exactly planned out beforehand, were once again revived. The brief and concise Regulations of 1812 seemed to those in charge of military affairs too simple

for peace-time. General Krauseneck, a distinguished collaborator in the drawing-up of the Regulations and afterwards Chief of the General Staff, discovered, when he took over the command of a division in 1821, that quite a number of supplementary orders had been added, and he found himself compelled to protest against them. He writes¹:

“We had never doubted that time and the experience of war might entail alterations, and that simplifications might be effected, but we never dreamed that the Regulations—in which we had aimed at the greatest possible brevity and clearness, as one of the most essential requirements—would, after a war which had been conducted to a glorious conclusion, be criticised as insufficiently detailed and precise. It is not only useless, it is harmful, to aim at excessive hair-splitting

¹ Malachowski. *Scharfe Taktik und Revuetaktik*. Berlin, 1902. E. S. Mittler und Sohn.

preciseness in the case of every order, and to strive after uniformity with a scrupulousness that borders on pedantry. Such a uniformity can never be attained, and, even if it could be attained, it would not repay the trouble and energy expended upon it."

General Krauseneck was of opinion that uniformity in matters of detail was rather injurious than otherwise, and he insisted that the greatest possible freedom as regards the means for attaining the desired end had the result of infusing spirit and energy into the men.

Fortunately it was not to happen that the "mechanical heads" should triumph once again in the Prussian army, as Scharnhorst had feared. The conditions had been completely altered since 1806. The introduction of universal service entailed on the officer educational duties which had not fallen to him in the old army. Also, although the army did not

have an opportunity of gaining new experience of war on a large scale, the dangerous tendencies with which it had become infected were none the less successfully overcome. In this connection valuable service was rendered by the Prince of Prussia. His clear understanding in regard to military matters enabled him to form a very just estimate of the limits within which a rational training by means of drill ought to be confined, and this at a time when a one-sided training, with a view principally to the requirements of parades, seemed still to be completely in the ascendent. In notes which he made in the year 1840,¹ the Prince laid down principles which still hold good at the present day. He wrote: "The sole purpose of the drilling-ground is, in my opinion, to achieve order. If the spirit of order exists in a troop, it is possible

¹ *Militärische Schriften Kaiser Wilhelms des Grossen.*
I., No. 336ff. Bemerkung zu einer Denkschrift Boyens.

to do anything with it; without order nothing is possible." The parade step, and the preparatory practice for it, the Prince held to be indispensable, "if," he says, "we are to have troops and not a mere assembled mob." Thus the Prince assigned to the parade the importance which properly belongs to it, and to which it can justly lay claim even at the present day. A very careful training by means of drill is an indispensable preparation. Therefore, in the same notes, the Prince says further in regard to drill: "Uniformity is indispensable. Why should one be permitted to do his task well, and another to do it badly? . . . Either we intend to have a trained troop or else a mob of undisciplined men. That is a point which must be settled." Further he says that the objectionable term "Trillen" is constantly applied to what is really no more than soldierly discipline, as opposed to rustic clownish-

ness. The future Emperor expressed very finely his firm and unshakable confidence in the efficiency of the army for purposes of war when he said that suspicions ought not to be entertained concerning the spirit of the army merely because, in addition to its actual achievements, it presented a handsome outward appearance. "Any one who has had to do with the army for twenty years will have only one opinion on this head, namely, that the spirit and the will of the army are above all praise, and that such an *esprit de corps* exists in it as never before."

It was not prejudice in favour of what was old and accustomed, nor mere routine, that caused the German army to preserve its "handsome outward appearance," but the recognition, based upon history, that any negligence in this respect constitutes a serious danger. Archduke Albert of Austria, in 1869,

drew attention to the existence of such a danger in "the efforts of a subversive Press to turn to ridicule the discipline and strict regulations which are indispensable in every army."¹ In the fifties of last century the stimulating influence of Prince Frederick Charles made itself felt in the Prussian army. It was particularly effective, because here was the case of a royal prince who made it his aim to plan the training and education of the soldier directly with a view to actual warfare. The Prince succeeded in overcoming a far too narrow-minded preference for parade-drill and the affectations of the drilling-ground, although he insisted that a certain stiffness was in harmony both with our traditions and with our national character, and was also a good means of instilling discipline.

"It is the warlike spirit that decides,"

¹ *Ueber Verantwortlichkeit im Kriege.*

wrote the Prince in 1858,¹ “not the tactical form. The form must be elastic; it must not exercise compulsion in a certain direction. Every epoch has had its special tactical forms, and these have been connected with the warlike spirit of the age and with the nature of its equipment for war. . . . The more developed the warlike spirit in the individual soldier, the greater will be the energy of the whole mass, and the less will be the influence of the tactical form.”

The importance which Prince Frederick Charles attached to the mutual relations between the leader and the troops is evident from the following words which he wrote in the year 1860. He says²:

“The general is the loved and respected chief, not a scolding, punishing task-

¹ Wolfgang Foerster. *Prinz Friedrich Karl von Preussen. Denkwürdigkeiten aus seinem Leben.* I., p. 170. Stuttgart und Leipzig, 1910. Deutsche Verlagsanstalt.

² *Ibidem*, i., p. 219.

master. When he addresses his troops (which he should do only seldom) all hearts beat faster. He must know how to touch those chords which produce a fine ring. He is pleasant and friendly with all his subordinates, and the more so according as they are the farther removed from him in rank. He has always a friendly word and a sympathetic greeting for the man in the ranks. Although they seldom see him at his work, and then only accidentally and when he rides past them, they none the less delight in his near presence and they are proud of him. He has rendered both the men and their officers susceptible to the inspiration which his presence, his glance, his words, and his bearing must infuse into them on the day of battle, and which must result in a trebling of their efforts. If then, in the fulness of their enthusiasm, they ask him eagerly, 'Sire, where is it your will that we should die?' then and only

then has he succeeded in making the right impression upon them in time of peace."

That this impression was actually produced in our army in the sense which the Prince intended has been proved by the World War, for never was the question which he desired uttered with a more sublime devotion than it has been by our troops during this War.

There has been much talk in Germany of the so-called trench-spirit, and of the fine comradeship between officers and men. But it has been overlooked that this comradeship, based upon the loyal solicitude of the officers for their men, existed also before the War. It was merely expressed in a different way. The officer must make a difference in his behaviour towards the younger troops, who have to be trained and disciplined, and his behaviour towards the fully-trained and, in particular, the older men,

whom he has to lead against the enemy. Moreover, it is only natural that, in the face of death, a greater equality should prevail between superiors and subordinates. But the officer stands just as much above his subordinates in the trenches as elsewhere. The lack of officers after the heavy losses in August, 1914, made itself very seriously felt, and even men who had been brave hitherto failed occasionally when the enemy fire suddenly deprived them of their leaders. Good relations between officers and men will and must remain after the War, but they must not be such as to be prejudicial to the authority of the superior officer. Our young men, who have outgrown paternal discipline in the course of the War and have rendered splendid services before their time, will stand in very special need of the rigorous training afforded by the army.

The officer must be "of that ruling

race who exert a controlling influence, even if momentarily they are not within sight or hearing.”¹ Field-Marshal Count Schwerin once declared that Fear and Love were the two instruments by which the soldier must be governed, and then added—and with manifest justice as applied to his time—that unfortunately Fear had to perform the lion’s share. The case has, however, unquestionably been reversed as regards our age. Prince Frederick Charles, even in his day, would have nothing to do with the “scolding and punishing taskmaster.”² Without dependence on the personality of the superior officer (though, of course, this presupposes a wholesome rigour in the latter), without enthusiasm for the work in hand, the results of military training will be merely superficial. The World

¹ Reisner v. Lichtenstern. *Schiessausbildung und Feuer der Infanterie im Gefecht*. Berlin, 1895. E. S. Mittler und Sohn.

² See p. 164.

War has demonstrated how very important it is that we should preserve all that military discipline which has proved its efficacy, but that at the same time we should enlist the services of the best men for this task.

“It is unjust to depreciate the reserves from the industrial districts and the big towns as compared with those from the rural districts. The latter may perhaps be endowed with greater physical fitness and endurance, but as regards those aptitudes in regard to present-day methods of warfare and the use of modern technical weapons for the purposes of war, which must be possessed even by the man in the ranks, the urban population, in view of their quicker intelligence, will undoubtedly possess certain advantages.”¹

If, before the War, certain prejudices

¹ Freytag-Loringhoven. *Die Grundbedingungen kriegsrischen Erfolges*. 1914. E. S. Mittler und Sohn. (The War has completely justified this view.)

on this head existed in the officers' corps, they have perished as the result of the War, equally with many others. It is our duty to concede full recognition to the human personality in all our troops. Present-day social conditions, no less than the achievements of our national army as a whole in the course of the War, demand this. A national army cannot be other than a democratic organisation. The task of the officers is in high degree a social task—social, that is to say, in an aristocratic sense; for what has rendered our army so efficient has been precisely the thoroughly aristocratic organisation of the officers' corps upon a democratic basis.

Prince Bülow says very justly in reference to Scharnhorst's army reforms:

“Through the material of the national army, an institution of a democratic nature, runs a thread of the modern aristocracy. The happy thought of mak-

ing entry into the corps of officers contingent upon election by the corps of officers made it possible in the structure of the national army to take account of the structure of the nation. Probably nothing in the past, as in the present, has to such a degree assured the superiority of our army as the fact that the leading position, which is the natural due of those who rank highest in intellect and education, has been retained by them in the army. . . . The World War has shown that devotion and contempt of death are the common heritage of every German soldier. But it has also been a song of praise of mutual confidence between officers and men, such as the world has never seen. . . . The spirit of German militarism, as Prussia first developed it and Germany adopted it, is every whit as monarchical as it is aristocratic and democratic, and it would cease to be German and the mighty expression of German

imperial military power and military efficiency if it were to change. If our enemies, to whom with God's help our militarism will bring defeat, abuse it, we know that we must preserve it, for to us it means victory and the future of Germany."¹

The War has brought about an almost complete fusion of the officers' corps of the active army with the officers on the reserve list. We had fully recognised the importance of the tasks which, in case of war, must fall to the officers of the Reserves and the Landwehr, and for more than a decade prior to the War we had devoted special care to their training. This precaution has reached a rich reward. During the War, wherever the conditions made it possible, this training has been continued—especially in the case of the younger officers who had recently

¹ *Imperial Germany*, pp. 154-6. London, Cassell & Co., Ltd. [*Deutsche Politik*, 1916, pp. 163-4.]

obtained their captaincies—by means of numerous courses of instruction organised behind the front. Though very satisfactory results were achieved by this means, it ought none the less to be borne in mind that only in connection with the officers' corps of the active army and under its guidance were the officers of the reserve able to render such valuable services to the Fatherland. The long duration of the War brought it about that the memory of their civilian calling became more and more effaced. They were completely absorbed into the organic entity of the troop; they became professional soldiers equally with the men; they acquired a training which they had lacked in peace-time, when their adoption of the profession of arms had been only an incidental experience. To the professional knowledge, which they gained in an increasing degree, was added all that intelligence and energy which char-

acterise the German whenever he occupies a responsible position in a civilian calling. Thus the officers of the reserve soon exhibited no longer any difference from the officers of the active army. They may have exhibited less familiarity with routine duties, but this was equally the case with the younger officers of the standing army, who lacked for this purpose the necessary experience of active service, brilliant as was the example which they furnished to their troops during battle.

Moreover our regiments were commanded by staff officers who were considerably younger both in years and in experience of military service than was customary before the War in the case of these positions. We shall not see such young commanders in time of peace. This will not be prejudicial to the army, for in time of peace the qualities demanded from the commander of a regiment, in respect to the training of the officers'

corps and the inner consolidation of the troop, are somewhat different from those required in time of war. In time of peace we need for this position fully-matured and self-assured personalities. On the other hand, it is just the officers occupying the middle status of regimental and battalion commanders who have been subjected to a severe strain in this War, a fact which should warn us not to allow officers to occupy these positions in peacetime after they have reached a certain age.

It proved advantageous and necessary not only to promote many excellent non-commissioned officers to officers' rank, but also frequently to extend the sphere for the replenishment of the officers' corps, in the case both of the regular army and the reserves, very considerably beyond the limits customary in time of peace. In doing this many prejudices were set aside, often with very beneficial

results. At the same time it ought to be borne in mind that, in peace-time, no matter how insistently direct preparation for war is put in the first rank of importance, none the less all kinds of claims are made upon the officers which disappear in time of war, and therefore the choice of persons suitable for the position of officer is necessarily confined within narrower limits. We need not take into account here the question of pecuniary circumstances, but education, intellectual bias, and ambition do not suffice to render every individual fit for the position of officer.

The spirit of German militarism, which has enabled us to stand the test of the World War, and which we must preserve in the future, because with it our world-position stands or falls,—which, moreover is “every whit as monarchical as it is aristocratic and democratic,”—rests ultimately on the building up of an officers’

corps which shall be thoroughly efficient for purposes of war. For this purpose a sound aristocratic tradition is of the highest value. This is in no way connected with so-called Junkerdom and caste-feeling. Even in the case of the army of the young North American Republic, Washington demanded that only "gentlemen" should be given a commission. Aristocratic tradition, in the wider sense, is of the utmost service in the training of personalities. No profession stands in greater need of the latter than that of the officer. The choice of the most suitable man can, however, only be satisfactorily accomplished by means of the gradual replenishment of the officers' corps, and not by the arbitrary placing of all on the same level.

The warlike efficiency of the ruling class in Japan was essentially the result of the tradition which lived in the old Samurai families. Even the army of the

first French Empire, in spite of the democratic notions which linked it with the time of the Republic, none the less did not lose all its connection with the army of the *ancien régime*. Napoleon made it his immediate endeavour to develop a new chivalry in his army, and to fill up the ranks of his officers from the families of the old nobility. In spite of the intense revolutionary and national feeling, republican tendencies alone could not have endowed the armies of the Revolution with the necessary stanchness. It was only the development of a military hierarchy and its consolidation in course of time, combined with the leadership of Napoleon and the great aims which he held up before his army, that raised the latter to supreme war-efficiency.

In any case the masses, as such, can never rule. If mob-rule is consequently an absurdity in a State, how much more so is it in an army. The army which

Russia now proclaims to be a national army is by no means efficient for purposes of war. The words of Treitschke are significant here:

“A Republic is confronted with still more serious difficulties in the matter of a standing army. All history has shown that such an army, whose commissioned ranks are imbued with definite class feelings, will always be monarchically inclined.”¹

Only under the absolute command of a war lord can an army achieve a really vigorous development. It cannot be emphasised too often what an immense debt the Prussian army—and therewith all Germany—owes to the Prussian Kings.

Napoleon declared, when he was at St. Helena: “Armies are monarchical through and through.”² This had been

¹ Heinrich v. Treitschke, *Politics*, vol. ii., p. 299–300. London, Constable & Co. Ltd. New York, The Macmillan Company. [*Politik*, II., p. 275.]

² Gourgaud. *Ste. Hélène*, i. .

clearly exhibited in his own army, above all in the Imperial Guard, and in the spirit which animated the latter. The achievements of the French army under their great Emperor, and, equally so, those of the last world war, rested on a surer foundation than the *Spectateur Militaire*, with its empty phrase-mongering, was willing to admit, when it declared at the beginning of the sixties of last century¹:

“The French soldier sees in all his officers, from the sub-lieutenant to the marshal, merely his equals; he has the clear and certain conviction that he is inferior to them only in military rank. Neither training nor education nor birth produces an essential difference between them. The sense of equality is so strong that the sense of the ego completely disappears under the absolute domina-

¹ Quoted from Jähns, *Das französische Heer von der grossen Revolution bis zur Gegenwart*. Leipzig, 1873.

tion of the law of discipline. To what enemy could such soldiers be inferior? What human might could successfully resist such soldiers as these, soldiers who stand on an equality with their officers and who are all heroes?"

This is an instance of that thoroughly French notion of the supreme blessing of equality. How little it really signifies, and how far it is from being equivalent to freedom, has been demonstrated by the World War. Instead of a truly liberal State, we see in the French Republic a country enslaved by a plutocracy and governed by the arbitrary will of its English ally. Moreover, every army should esteem itself fortunate in possessing its own particular notion of discipline. We have in any case had sufficient experience of the blessings which our own discipline brings in its train to the welfare of the German Fatherland, and we intend to hold fast to it in the future.

Since the reforms of Scharnhorst, it has been a principle with us that the officer is raised above the men in the ranks both by education and training. Since the standard of education of the mass of the people has been considerably raised during the last hundred years, it is only logical that higher demands should be made from the officers in this respect than was the case at the time of the War of Liberation. Only there must be general recognition of the fact that this education does not by any means consist in the piling up of a mass of learning. The school education of our youth must be such as to furnish them with a sound foundation on which to build up later their knowledge of life. Experience has taught us that the dispute about the superior merit of a humanistic education as a preparation for life is really of very little importance. The former pupils of the various educational establishments do

not exhibit any marked differences from one another as the result of their training, and this for the reason that a man begins really to learn only after he has left school. Not till then does he perceive things in their true relations; provided only that his school has furnished him with a basis upon which to build up his further knowledge. The War, which has reduced so many things to their true value, has also revealed clearly the difference between genuine education and mere acquisition of knowledge. Every one among us who has talked with our soldiers, whether at home or in the field, has found reason to rejoice in their sound judgment. Often one could not help feeling that their simple understanding had preserved a higher degree of impartiality and freshness than is commonly to be found in the so-called educated classes. This was, of course, by no means a new experience for any officer who had

known how to find the way to the hearts of his men. The modest learning of those who have been educated in elementary schools and have not had a complete secondary education is frequently more thorough as far as it goes, provided that they are endowed with intelligence and the desire for knowledge. They are contented, according to their lights, and frequently give evidence of an astonishingly profound cultivation of the qualities of the heart, and this is in fact the true source of their courage and steadfastness in time of trouble. Those who have had the benefit of an academic training have certainly not the smallest reason to look down upon such men as these.

In the second volume of his *History of Germany during the Nineteenth Century*, Treitschke says, concerning the period following the Wars of Liberation:

“Because they avoided that soul-destroying education which provides a

smattering of everything, the classical schools succeeded in kindling in their pupils an enduring delight in classical antiquity and the desire for a liberal and humane culture. Moreover, as yet, that disease of modern universities, the examination-craze, was almost entirely unknown. Those old and famous homes of classical learning, the Fürstenschulen of Saxony and the convent schools of Württemberg, sent on their senior scholars to the university, as soon as it seemed to their teachers that they were ripe for this, and the State made no objections.”¹

Since the year 1882, when Treitschke wrote these words, many improvements have been made in our higher education, and Treitschke himself admits that the system of regular State examinations, which has existed in Prussia since the time of Frederick William I, even if it

¹ Heinrich von Treitschke. *Deutsche Geschichte im 19 Jahrhundert*. Vol. ii., p. 10.

is more mechanical, is at the same time more equitable, and is, in fact, a necessity in the case of a big State. The meaning of this foremost champion of Germanism is, however, obviously this, that a liberal and humane education is not absolutely bound up with the passing of the leaving examination.

We shall do well in the army if we endeavour, as hitherto, to see to it that as large a number as possible of ensigns and cadets shall pass their leaving examination before they enter the service; on the other hand, in view of the pre-eminently practical nature of their calling, we need not demand this unconditionally of the officers. This should, at any rate, be left to time, especially as the higher schools will have to endeavour to simplify their curriculum by reducing the number of subjects. A consideration of the increased demands which will undoubtedly have to be made upon our

young men in respect to physical culture will in itself necessitate this. This applies to the modern schools and to the upper modern schools (especially to the latter) just as much as to the classical schools. The younger seats of learning, in their anxiety to raise themselves to the educational level of the classical schools, have frequently lost sight of the fact that it is they above all who should devote their attention to training with a view to practical life and not with a view to a high standard of scholarship.

These questions may appear to have little to do with the War, and it would be narrow-minded to endeavour to make considerations which have resulted from the War the basis of our educational system. No one, however, will dispute the fact that the World War has given us cause to subject our national life to a thorough examination in all its departments and that it must mark the beginning of all kinds of

new developments. Moreover, the training of our youth is more or less closely related to the development of our armed force.

In the case of the education of a future officer, the same demands need not be made as in the case of a young man who intends to devote himself to learned studies, or to the investigation of technical problems. It must, however, be such as not only to qualify him for the training and leadership of his men, but, above all, it must give him that self-assurance in dealing with any situation, which is required of an educated man. In regard to the further education of the officer, intellectual development in all the departments which directly or indirectly concern the soldierly profession is of great importance in relation to his military duties, but first and foremost in importance is the training of character, the cultivation of a distinguished mode of thought. In the time of Napoleon,

it was said that every one of his soldiers carried the field-marshal's baton in his knapsack. With us this is true, in a metaphorical and a better sense, of every officer. He can and must strive to attain that "harmonious combination of abilities" which Clausewitz declared to be the characteristic of military genius. Thereby he will guard himself against narrow-mindedness and the danger of that mechanical mode of thought which the predominance of technical science at the present day is apt to induce.

"Technical science and inward culture, or even human happiness, have little connection with one another. In the midst of vast technical achievements, it is possible for humanity to sink back into complete barbarism."

This opinion, which was expressed by Professor Werner Sombart,¹ in spite of

¹ *Die Deutsche Volkswirtschaft im 19 Jahrhundert*, 3d edn., p. 134. Berlin, Georg Bondi. 1913.

his high appreciation of the progress of technical science in other respects, has, unfortunately, been to a large extent confirmed by the World War. The officer must possess a thorough appreciation of technical science, but this must not mislead him into neglecting the study of men. Knowledge of men is the fundamental condition of successful leadership. Hence the study of history—above all of military history—is of the highest value. It is an inexhaustible source of instruction, an unequalled source of consolation in the midst of the monotony which is an inevitable circumstance of service in time of peace, for it keeps the eyes fixed at the same time on the grandeur and sublimity of the soldier's calling, and it encourages that just appreciation of the moral element in war which in the course of a long peace is apt to be lost sight of.

Field-Marshal Count Schlieffen, in the latter years of his life, expressed his

regret that he had not been able earlier, before he became Chief of the General Staff, to spare the time for the study of military history which he could now devote to it. "Despise mere reason and abstract science," he said once, placing his hand upon a book which lay before him, while he expressed his opinion of those who imagine that they can do anything merely with the aid of their own experience. And at the Centenary celebrations at the Staff College he uttered the following memorable words:

"Before everyone who wishes to become a commander-in-chief, there lies a book entitled *The History of War*. It is not always, I must admit, very amusing. It involves the toiling through a mass of by no means exciting details. But by their means we arrive at facts, often soul-stirring facts, and at the root of it lies the perception of how everything has

happened, how it was bound to happen, and how it will again happen."

The General Staff, which had been educated in the school of this man, has done him no discredit. His training has up^rto the present triumphantly stood the test to which it has been subjected in this War. Not only have the officers of the General Staff shown themselves capable of filling much higher positions than those for which they were intended in respect of age and length of service; but also for numerous appointments on the General Staff it has been necessary to have recourse to officers who before the War were still at the Staff College, or to those who, in the course of the War, had proved their worth as adjutants attached to the higher staffs. The very substantial augmentations of the large troop-units during the War necessitated this. The fact that these officers have proved themselves equal to their tasks

is in itself a convincing argument on behalf of that uniform mental training with a view to war which prevailed in the army before the War, and which extended far beyond the limits of the General Staff. The heritage of Field-Marshal von Moltke was well administered and added to in the hands of Schlieffen. And Schlieffen's successor, Colonel-General von Moltke, not only rendered great service by increasing our armed force; he also rendered the further service that he always realised the importance of training the officers of the General Staff with a view to war, and that he steadily and clearsightedly pursued this end.

Not only at the Front and on the higher staffs have the officers of all arms shown themselves equal to their tasks, but also behind the Front, on the lines of communication, and on home service, where they have filled positions of author-

ity for which they had received no real training. Regular officers, half-pay officers, and officers of the reserve have equally held their own; and the explanation of this lies in the fact that all military efficiency is nothing less than the exercise of sound human intelligence.

A consideration of these facts may well afford us satisfaction and be accounted a proof that we have worked on the right lines in all these departments, but it must not lead us into imagining that we have reached the pinnacle of perfection. Here also it will be necessary later on to build upon the basis of the new experiences we have gained. We must not overlook the fact that the long duration of the War, and, in part also, the stationary conditions which it engendered, furnished all those who took part in it with abundant opportunity for training and study and rendered it easier for them to become familiar with the duties of their positions.

On the other hand, the World War has revealed the variety of the tasks which may devolve upon the officer in war, tasks for which, as far as is possible, he must be prepared in time of peace. Therefore a deepening as well as an extending of his professional training is to be aimed at. A training at the Staff College will never be possible for more than a limited number. The War Schools, even if (as is urgently to be desired) their course of training is extended over a longer period and their programme of study somewhat enlarged in scope, none the less cannot furnish more than a foundation for the special knowledge which the officer must possess and which he must afterwards acquire. This after-training was before the War for the most part left completely to the individual. But not everyone is capable of achieving it unaided, especially in the department of military history, which can never be

more than skimmed over in the War Schools.

Therefore it seems desirable that an intermediate stage between the War School and the Staff College should be established, in the form, say, of nine-month courses, which it would be obligatory upon all the senior lieutenants to attend. The mere fact that, during the World War, the regular course of training in the War Schools has had to be replaced by an abbreviated course makes such an institution very desirable, since it may prove impossible to arrange that all those who have been promoted to officer's rank during the long War should subsequently go through the training provided in the War Schools. Those who had concluded their intermediate course with the greatest distinction would be sent on to the Staff College, at which in their case a two-years' course would suffice. By this means, the Staff College would be

able to confer the benefit of its instruction upon a number of picked officers larger than that customary hitherto by a third as much again. The Staff College will remain, as before, the special nursing-ground for the General Staff, the higher adjutancy, and the military teaching-staff. The other officers, who, after the completion of the above-mentioned nine-months' course, go back to the Front, will in any case have gained the advantage of a more thorough education, both as regards special training for their profession and general culture.

In order to achieve this, it would be advisable that these institutions should be established in university towns, so that the services of the professors who would there be available might be turned to account. This world economic War has revealed the necessity that officers should make themselves so far familiar with political, constitutional, economic,

and social questions as to enable them to form an independent judgment about these subjects. The character of the whole modern life of our State makes it desirable that the officer should keep himself in touch with these questions, though he need not for that reason become a politician. Frederick the Great, even in his day, wrote: "I expect above all that a general shall be an honest man and a good citizen of the State; without these qualities, all his ability and all his skill in war will be rather harmful than profitable."¹ By this the King implies that military science and political science are closely related. We must contrive to kindle in the officer, while he is still young, an interest in this relation, so that he may be capable, in the training of his men, of enlightening them

¹ *General-Prinzipien vom Kriege. Von denen Talents, welche ein General haben muss.* Taysen, Friedrich der Grosse. Militärische Schriften, p. 106.

from time to time upon questions of civic and economic life. Short, well-written primers might be of great value here.

That "untiring application" which King Frederick demanded from his officers and which has also always been demanded of us, must be insisted on more than ever after the War. Its intellectual side is by no means the least important. The training of the mind by assiduous study is a necessity not only for the officers of the General Staff, but also for those who wish to occupy with advantage any high position in the army. We have no use for officers with a scholastic training, but we do need officers with well-trained minds. Napoleon felt keenly the lack of such, and, even at St. Helena, he placed the Austrian General Staff above his own.¹ As long as theory does not set itself—to use the words of Clausewitz—"in opposition to intelligence," it can

¹ Gourgaud, *Ste. Hélène*, ii., p. 416.

only be useful, for it is then no longer theory in the vulgar sense. Even the talent of the most famous representatives of the military art—Frederick the Great, Napoleon, and Moltke—had a theoretical foundation, but this foundation consisted only in education of the mind, which had been developed and enlarged as a result of their own experience of life and of war. In any case, the important thing can never be the encouragement of purely theoretical knowledge in the army, but rather the transforming of knowledge into practice. Willisen¹ has said justly: “It is always a long step from knowledge to ability to act, but none the less it is a step from knowledge and not from ignorance.”

¹ *Theorie des grossen Krieges.*

VI

STILL READY FOR WAR

THE war-readiness of Germany had been very much increased by the votings of the last great Army Bills, together with the carrying out of the programme of naval construction. And yet we have been obliged to organise new formations on a very large scale, and to develop our armaments industry to an extent which had never been anticipated. The levy on capital of a thousand million marks, measured on the scale of the costs of the War, now no longer seems to us the enormous sacrifice which caused doubts as to whether it could be demanded of the German people. The War has, on the one hand, revealed to us the full financial strength of Germany; but, on the other

hand, it has proved that additional expenditure on the army at the right time would have been profitable. We should then have saved in this War not only milliards of marks, but in all probability we should have had to offer up a far less considerable sacrifice of men. In view of the central position of the Fatherland, larger expenditure on the land-army, in addition to the necessary expenditure on the fleet, was absolutely essential. The demands which in this connection were put before the Reichstag were but a feeble minimum of what was really desirable, as the World War has proved.

The fact that in peace time the high demands of the Army Estimates encountered all kinds of objections, must certainly not be overlooked, more especially in view of the fact that it is easy, in the case of a war the vast extent and long duration of which could not have been foreseen, to declare after the event

that our armaments were not sufficient. The fact, however, still remains, and it is important that we should not lose sight of it, for we have to learn from it the lesson that in future we must disregard every objection, and must see to it that the disproportion between the credits which are asked for and what has to be done in case of war shall in any case never again be so great as it was in the World War. By means of the last Army Bills, which called to the colours a number of men fit for service whom it had not been possible to enlist hitherto, we had already before the War taken steps to restore to compulsory military service the character of universality which belonged to it under law, but which, with the increase of the population, just as formerly in Prussia prior to the army reforms of 1859, threatened more and more to be abandoned. We shall have to continue to pursue this road in future,

quite apart from the necessary increase of garrison artillery and technical troops. Moreover, when the number of those who have fought in the Great War has dwindled, we shall have to aim at subjecting at least to a cursory training the men of military age who are at first rejected, but who in the course of the War have turned out to be fit for service, so that, when war breaks out, they may form a generous source of reserves. Only so can we arrive at a real national army, in which everyone has gone through the school of the standing army.

In the case of those who have enlisted at the age fixed for military service, it will not be possible to reduce the length of the prescribed term of service without detriment to the strength of our whole army of organisation as tested in the War. Periods of leave might, indeed, be granted during the second or third years of service. The chief task of all our associa-

tions of young men will be to qualify for enlistment in the army larger numbers of those liable to service than has been the case hitherto. In addition to the training which they afford our youth both from a physical and an intellectual point of view, these associations will, precisely in view of the nature of present-day warfare, which demands in a high degree sportsmanlike qualities, manual skill, and technical knowledge, form an excellent preparatory school for the army. They cannot, however, furnish a substitute for actual military training.

It may be asked, What is the use of all this? Will not the general exhaustion of Europe after the world conflagration of a certainty put the danger of a new war, to begin with, in the background, and does not this terrible slaughter of nations point inevitably to the necessity of disarmament to pave the way to permanent peace? The reply to that is that nobody

can undertake to guarantee a long period of peace, and that a lasting peace is guaranteed only by strong armaments. Our own armament, although it may have been defective in some respects, has none the less secured peace for us for forty years, that is to say, for such a length of time as has hardly ever before been experienced in the world's history, in the case of a great country. Moreover, world-power is inconceivable without striving for expression of power in the world and consequently for sea-power. But this involves the constant existence of a large number of potential causes of friction. Hence arises the necessity for adequate armaments on land and sea.

A sound policy of power is by no means equivalent to a one-sided glorification of war. It is true that the effects of war are in many respects very beneficial. War banishes pretence and reveals the truth. It produces the most sublime

manifestations of masculine personality, and the greatest devotion and self-sacrifice for the sake of the community. If ever an age has corroborated the words of Treitschke that "the features of history are virile,"¹ it is the present, and we, Germans have been described by a Swede as "the most powerful military nation in the world's history."² But this does not in any way alter the fact that the effects of war are terrible; nay, that, judged by these, war seems to civilised men absolutely senseless, in view of the sacrifice and destruction which it entails, and of the misery which it brings in its train. And, none the less, however convinced we may be that war is a sin against humanity, that it is something worthy of detestation, this conviction

¹ Heinrich v. Treitschke. *Politics*, vol. i., pp. 20-21. London, Constable & Co., Ltd.; New York, The Macmillan Company. [*Politik*, i., p. 30.]

² Fredrik Böök. *Deutschland und Polen*, p. 14. Munich, 1917.

brings us no nearer to eternal peace. War has its basis in human nature, and as long as human nature remains unaltered, war will continue to exist, as it has existed already for thousands of years. The often quoted saying of Moltke that wars are inhuman, but eternal peace is a dream, and not even a beautiful dream, will continue to be true. The World War has also fully confirmed the justice of the following words of Heinrich von Treitschke: "The polished man of the world and the savage have both the brute in them. Nothing is truer than the biblical doctrine of original sin, which is not to be uprooted by civilisation, to whatever point you may bring it."¹ A long peace, such as that which preceded the World War, had frequently caused us to overlook the fact that it was not the fine

¹ Heinrich von Treitschke. *Politics*, vol. i., p. xl. London, Constable & Co., Ltd.; New York, The Macmillan Company. [*Politik*, i., p. 9.]

phrases about international bliss and brotherhood uttered on every occasion at public meetings which preserved us from war, but the might of our sword which was only fully revealed on the outbreak of war. And it will only be by this might that we shall be able to safeguard our peace in the future.

We misconstrue reality, if we imagine that it is possible to rid the world of war by means of mutual agreements. Such agreements will, in the future, as in the past, be concluded from time to time between States. The further development of international courts of arbitration, and the elimination of many causes of dispute by their agency, lies within the realm of possibility, but any such agreements will after all only be treaties which will not on every occasion be capable of holding in check the forces seething within the States. Therefore the idea of a universal league for the pre-

servation of peace remains a Utopia, and would be felt as an intolerable tutelage by any great and proud-spirited nation. Here, too, let us heed Treitschke's warning when he says: "The idea of one universal empire is odious. The ideal of a State co-extensive with humanity is no ideal at all. In a single State the whole range of culture could never be fully spanned."¹ The fact that it was precisely the President of the United States of North America who advocated such a brotherhood of nations must in any case arouse our wonderment. America's behaviour in the War has shown that pacifism, as represented in America, is only business pacifism, and so at the bottom nothing else than crass materialism. This truth is not altered by the fact that it is wrapped in a hazy garment

¹ Heinrich von Treitschke. *Politics*, vol. i., p. 19. London, Constable & Co., Ltd.; New York, The Macmillan Company. [*Politik*, i., p. 29.]

of idealism and so seeks to hide its real significance from unsuspecting minds. Nor is the truth altered by the appeal to democratic tendencies, for precisely this War is showing that those who at present hold power in the great democracies have risked in irresponsible fashion the future of the peoples entrusted to their guidance. In any event, as regards us Germans, the World War should disencumber us once and for all of any vague cosmopolitan sentimentality. If our enemies, both our secret and our avowed enemies, make professions of this nature, that is for us sufficient evidence of the hypocrisy which underlies them.

No one can foresee future developments, least of all while such a war as the present is still in progress. Hence it is not impossible that pacifist tendencies, based upon motives of utility, may gain currency to a certain degree, but they will not conduce to the betterment of human-

ity. We find it impossible to believe in the realisation of genuine pacifist ideals, such as are cherished by well-meaning sentimentalists. Only a spiritual transformation of the human race could bring this about, and how far we are from any such transformation has been revealed by the War. Therefore, in regard to this question, we should pay less heed to the phrases of present-day prophets than to the views of old and truly wise men. We must not put might before right, but equally little shall we and can we dispense with might. In the future, as in the past, the German people will have to seek firm cohesion in its glorious army and in its belaulled young fleet.

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